

# Music & Letters

*A Quarterly Publication*

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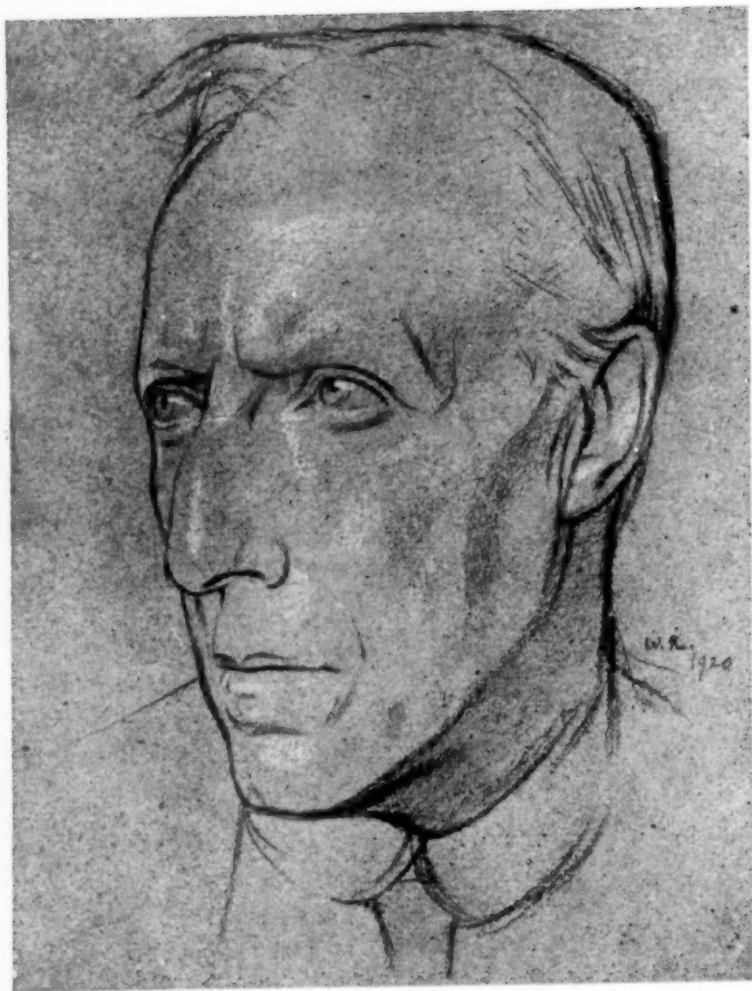
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CECIL SHARP

# *Music and Letters*

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## TO LESBIA

AFTER CATULLUS

Beloved, let us live and love nor pay  
One penny fee for what grave old folks say.  
The suns go down and other suns will rise,  
For us when once our transient day's light dies  
Is one eternal night to sleep. Wherefore  
Give me a thousand kisses and again  
A hundred, and another thousand yet,  
And still a hundred and a thousand more,  
Till they be grown to many thousands. Then  
Let us lose count of them and quite forget;  
Lest some base soul should envy us that wist  
The number of the kisses we had kissed.

RENNELL RODD.

## AN OLD SONG RE-WRITTEN

(HENRY LAWES' "SECOND BOOK OF AYRES")

## 1

Still to be neat, still to be drest  
As you were Nature's bidden guest,  
Bound in her palace to appear  
With clothing void of dust or smear,  
This is the outward habit found  
Where all within is sweet and sound.

## 2

Still to compel, day after day,  
The feet upon their ordered way,  
Still to bring back from play or toil  
The hands at evening clean from soil,  
This is the constant service meet  
For a sound heart and spirit sweet.

## 3

Still in the new light of the morn  
To waken like a child re-born,  
Still with a brow serene and fair  
To meet the common daily air,  
This is the payment life shall win  
If all be sweet and sound within.

J. W. MACKAIL.

## CECIL SHARP

CECIL SHARP has done honest work for his generation, and they know it. In the spirit of the true guildsman he looks on the work of others with humility and without envy and takes a pride in making his own in every detail as good as he can. The songs and dances he has collected from gaffers and gammers up and down England, and a bit of New England, have meant to him more than the notes and the words and the steps. This something more he has tried to convey in some hundred publications, by the setting of the tune, perhaps, or with fragments of apposite folklore; or by lectures—and he is a good talker, or by argument—and he loves a difficult one; but chiefly by just “going on”—sick, or sorry, or stony-broke, as the case may be, very happy—and believing that “there’s nothing like leather.”

He was not the first to preach the gospel of healthy song, nor has he been by any means alone in the good work; but of this health-giving dance we should, but for him, have known nothing. That both are old is not his reason for advocating them. His turn of mind is out and out Radical, and antiquarianism for its own sake never attracted him. It is because these things are untouched by the fashion of the day or by what selfconsciousness there may be in creative art, and because they are things we can all do and delight in the doing, that he believes in them and hopes to get others to believe.

National dance is lightly handled in the next article. There is much to be said about national song too, but a sentence will suffice here. The tune comes by paying attention to the words; both are logically rather than historically old, since they issue from a mind which is concerned with the simplest human needs and pays no court to convention; and both are national only in the sense in which our dress, our worship, or our law is national—because they are quite unconscious, and not because they are “in ballad metre” or “in the Dorian.”

At the beginning of the second year of this magazine a portrait of Cecil Sharp finds a natural place. The idea of the magazine was his; and he urged it on the plea that he “couldn’t write himself” but liked to read those who could. So, like a dutiful godchild, it now presents its fifth number hoping for his approval.



## CECIL SHARP AND FOLK DANCING

*Interdum vulgus rectum videt. Hor. Ep., ii, 1, 63.*

ONCE upon a time, in the dark ages of twenty years ago, England scarcely realized that she possessed any tradition of folk-music or folk-dance at all. Yet such things were to be found at village festivities, where they were smiled upon by the "higher minds" as a harmless form of rustic buffoonery; but to suggest that they represented a form of art was news which had to be broken very gently.

The change in this attitude dates from Boxing Day, 1899, when a musician—Cecil Sharp—turned up by accident in the little village of Headington in Oxfordshire. He was hardly an orthodox musician according to "the County" standard, for his hair was not long nor his tie a butterfly bow, but, fortunately for posterity, he happened to be the right musician for the occasion.

As he stepped into the streets of Headington that December day, he chanced to hear a concertina playing a little country tune, fresh and marching with rhythm, and saw six strapping countrymen with fluttering kerchiefs and jingling bells dancing in the snow. He instantly realized that he had stumbled upon an art of great value. There was something so satisfying and sincere in this dance with its swinging tune, that the dancing he was accustomed to, with its little shams and artificialities, seemed too puny to be compared with it.

His next concern was how to spread his discovery: to publish the tune was simple enough; ordinary musical notation could put it within reach of everyone; but to translate into cold print the complicated steps of a team of six men and their counter arm-rhythms, together with the general track or design of the dance, was a task to make the strongest blench, and I regret to add that Cecil Sharp blenched thereat and only noted the tune on this occasion. But, like the elephant's child, he had a "'satiabile curiosity" which fired him with the determination to explore the whole field of English dancing and devise some form of notation which would convey his discoveries to his fellow-countrymen.

His first insight into a method came from that celebrated little

book of the 16th century. "*Orchésographie*," by Thoinot Arbeau (Jehan Tabourot, Canon of Langres in 1588). It is written in the form of a dialogue between Arbeau and one Capriol; and in addition to its great historic value, showing as it does the habits and courtesies of the day (extremely diverting and a little shocking) it is a mine of information on the dances themselves. In describing the Morris or Morisco, Arbeau gives the air, which, he says, was played upon a pipe and tabor, and puts signs under the notes to describe the steps as they occur in relation to the tune. This seemed something to go upon, so Cecil Sharp evolved a scheme whereby the footwork should be noted under, and the arm-movements above, the melody; the general track of the dance to be shown as a separate design (*cf.* the 18th century books on Country Dancing—Weaver 1710, Essex 1712, etc.); and this, together with very comprehensive notes, led to the system of notation which is so familiar to many of us in his books on the subject. He has so far published five books on Morris Dance; the first four were written in collaboration with his friend Herbert Macilwaine between 1907 and 1911, and the fifth in 1913 with George Butterworth, a magnificent morris dancer himself and a great enthusiast for folk-tune. The total number of dances published in these five volumes is ninety-five, but that figure does not represent the full collection made.

The Nature Dance with its ritual of fertility and decay—for this is what the Morris and Sword Dance represented in early days—is common to all countries, but it assumes peculiar national qualities in its distribution. In this country, possibly owing to the phlegmatic temperament of our people, despite the fact, that, for at least a thousand years, there has been no symbol of conscious religious motive, it has remained extraordinarily uncorrupt in its traditions, and a team of Morrismen to-day, at Bampton or Adderbury, or any of the few Midland villages where the dance is still performed, would immediately impress the spectator by the extreme dignity and almost reverence of their dancing, as well as by the meticulous care displayed in their "dressing up." These dances are thrillingly spectacular. Six strapping men with ruggles, fluttering with braids and tinkling with bells, and shirts adorned with gay rosettes, every accoutrement spick and span from top to toe; with handkerchiefs or sticks in their hands waving contra-rhythmically to the movements of their feet (but as an art, not a eurhythmic!) the six men dancing as one, vigorous but restrained, occasionally using a grotesque movement but never a clumsy one, leaping and capering into the air lithe as a wand, or with a stamp and a galley re-inforcing the rhythm of the tune, until each pulse in your body

is throbbing in unison. Every rudiment of true art with the utmost economy of movement; nothing fussy or superfluous, but virile to a degree; and *tunes* to make the heart of the most jaded musician leap with exhilaration.

It is traditionally and essentially a man's dance—about the only art in which that over-estimated sex has not suffered eclipse! It is sometimes danced by women, but the performance, apart from their personal pleasure in the dance, has little to recommend it. As an old morris dancer once remarked to Cecil Sharp—"Girls have got things for their use, and men have got things for *their* use, and the Morris is for men."

The sword dance found in the northern counties originally sprang from the same source as the Morris. In fact all our national dancing could probably be traced to a common origin of ancient religious ceremonial with sacrificial rites and other forms of paganism long since forgotten. Possibly owing to its continued connection with the mummers play the Sword Dance has perpetuated traces of these rituals rather more markedly than the Morris. For instance, at Grenosides, after the various intricacies of interlacing and disengaging the swords whilst running an amazing labyrinth of figures, the culminating point is reached when "the captain," with an animal's skin on his head, kneels in the centre of a circle made by the swordsmen who form a hexagonal lock around his neck by overlapping their swords hilt to point; then each dancer seizing his hilt again, draws his sword from the lock,—in a manner blood-curdling to watch but quite cosy for the man in the middle—and dances round in apparent frenzy, clashing his sword in the general *melée*.

Cecil Sharp has so far collected eighteen sword dances from Northumberland, Yorkshire and Durham, and wonderful dances they are, perhaps the most complex form of any folk-dance extant. I have never seen anything in Russian Ballet or any presentation of art-dance to compete with them in ingenuity and quasi-mathematical elaboration.

Both the English sword dances and Moriscos have, as I said before, "poor relations" in other countries; but the one dance which is exclusively English is the Country Dance proper. It was for this dance we were famed all over Europe in the middle ages as the "merry English" and the "dancing English." It was danced by all classes of the community in village, town and court, and was pre-eminently a social dance. Some of its movements—such as the "hey" or figure 8 in the morris, and the *poussette* of the sword dance—had no doubt been stolen from the ceremonial dances, but its whole character was social and not

spectacular. "L'on danse pour le seul plaisir de danser, pour agiter les membres accoutumés à un violent exercice, on danse pour exhiler un sentiment de joie qui n'a pas besoin de spectateurs"—so wrote a French author at the end of the 18th century; and it was from this value of personal amusement that it became the most popular dance of our nation for so many centuries.

It has not the "égoïsme à deux" of the ballroom dances of to-day. It is danced in couples, but the couples make groups, and even though your partner be a dull dog your dance may still be an enjoyable one; or, if your partner be particularly fascinating, it enables you to keep your head with a composure which would seem inconsistent with the closer embrace of the waltz or the jazz; or, saddest of all, if you are a "wallflower," it can give you—although country dancing was never intended to delight the eye—a truly consoling joy to watch; for, despite the simplicity of the steps, the designs and patterns the dancers weave and the little flashes of wit and fun which crop up every now and again in the movements are excellent entertainment of themselves.

To many, the term "country-dance" simply conjures up a nursery recollection of romping boys and girls engaged in "Sir Roger de Coverley"; but if these poor ignoramuses will glance at Cecil Sharp's five books on the Country Dance, they will find "squares" and "longways" and "rounds," for "fours," "sixes" and "eights," and others for "as many as will," about 130 dances in all (and more to come), all different and each a joy.

The greater number of these he took from Playford, who published in 1650 a first volume of country dances with their tunes. It is a great tribute to Cecil Sharp's pertinacity that he managed to elucidate the jargon used by Mr. John Playford into the simple directions which we follow to-day. Playford's "Dancing Master" went into about eighteen editions between 1650 and 1728, and it is probable that some of the dances therein, though unmistakably of folk origin, had been consciously developed and adapted. The tunes in several cases are obviously composed tunes of the period; not less beautiful than the peasant tunes, for England's music in the 17th century was at the same high-water mark as her dancing. The English Country Dance was not only popular in England but was danced considerably abroad. In the early part of the 18th century, we hear of the balls at Vienna always ending with English Country Dances, but, "so ill danced that there is very little pleasure in them": and they so hit the taste of France that little frenchifications crept in, and they merged into the "contre-danse" which finally came back to us in the form of Quadrilles and other set dances in the 19th century.

In 1911 the English Folk Dance Society was founded. Its objects were to spread the knowledge of folk-dancing in its various forms in conjunction with traditional music and children's singing games. The chief aim of the Society has been to preserve intact the traditions by directly controlling the teaching of the dances, in order to safeguard them from inaccuracies and subsequent corruption. But the organization with Cecil Sharp at its head has now a far wider range of activity. It has started branches in almost every large town in England, and some in Scotland, Ireland and America. It runs three vacation schools a year with an average attendance of 400 students a week, and organizes classes, lectures and demonstrations without number. Throughout the war it supplied several teachers under the leadership of Miss Daking to work with the Y.M.C.A. behind the lines, and at rest camps in France and England,—a venture which in spite of almost insurmountable difficulties met with unqualified success. It followed the army of occupation into Cologne and it has not been "demobbed" yet.

On Peace Day crowds of all and sundry joined in simple country dances to the strains of a military band in Hyde Park; and delightful use of folk-dance has been made in theatrical productions by Granville Barker and by Nigel Playfair. All the big social and educational organizations have long since realized the physical benefits of the dances and have encouraged a sort of patriotic pride in the songs and tunes; but many of us have yet to realize that their primary value is neither for the body nor the mind, but for the soul. It is our outlet of national expression—a real live art, which, if we are ever to become a musical nation again, must get into our very blood. Folk-song and dance is not a panacea for every composer who has gone dry: nor will "art-music" become any finer for conscious imitation of folk-methods: but, if there were a general taste for it again, and it returned to us as a habit, it would subconsciously permeate our art and make it representative and not imitative.

The full significance of Cecil Sharp's work has not yet been felt. Generations to come will venerate his name as the man who, when England's art in music and dance had become stale, revitalized her traditions and restored her belief in herself. He is neither crank nor pedant: his scholarliness and musicianship are ever subservient to his taste. He has a tremendous belief in the gospel of the commonplace and where most of us regard artistic feeling as a gift from Heaven to a chosen few, he feels it to be a general human asset, frequently distorted by environment, but common to all men. He also has the almost uncanny faculty of being able to penetrate through clumsiness of old age or rough voice right to



the merit of a dance or song and note it when others would possibly pass it by. Had it not been for him and his colleagues, the vast literature of English song and dance, with all its possibilities and promise, would have perished, unknown to future generations. Cheap publication and rapid transport have substituted the "royalty" ballad and the music-hall "turn" for the songs and dances with which we once amused ourselves: no man need make his own music to-day and the younger generation have forfeited the art. Folk-dance, like folk-song, was in imminent danger of dying with the father without ever reaching the son. The man, who above all others, has saved us from such a national disaster, is—Cecil Sharp.

WINIFRED SHULDHAM SHAW.

## THE DANCE OF THE SEISES\* AT SEVILLE

### I.

SEVILLE is always described as a miracle, and the justice of the description depends upon something more than the fortunate accident that *Sevilla* rhymes with *maravilla*. With some miracles it is better to accept and believe rather than to inquire into the evidence; the charm of Seville can, in part at any rate, be analysed and explained. Seville is in some ways the Brighton of Spain, and is inhabited by men and women of such grace and cordiality that the motto of the city should be *Pase usted* (won't you come in?) instead of that which it actually is. There is, unfortunately, a certain indifference to matters of art; dancing, painting and architecture are practised with success; music—real music, that is—interests hardly anyone outside the musical section of the *Ateneo Club*. Not long ago the musical director of the cathedral attempted to organize a series of secular choral and orchestral concerts. He was assisted by the city council; no expense was spared to engage a good orchestra and to have plenty of rehearsals. Yet very few people came to the concerts, and no one offered to sing in the chorus. The cathedral, then, is the only place where a musician can be sure of hearing something to interest him; the chance of listening to Haydn's quartet on the "Seven Words from the Cross" (which was written for the cathedral at Cadiz†) might almost persuade one to submit to the inconvenience and expense of Holy Week in Seville. The dance of the Seises, however, can be enjoyed comfortably and conveniently in June or December; and it is perhaps the most accurate test of the Sevillian atmosphere, that it seems perfectly natural to find that choir-boys

\* *Seis* (pronounced "say-iss"), six; plural, *seises* ("say-cess, or more commonly "say-say").

† This is the usual version of the story, as given by Grove's Dictionary. A distinguished musician, who is a native of Cadiz, informs me that the church for which Haydn was commissioned to write the "Seven Words from the Cross" was not the cathedral, but the church of La Cueva in the Calle del Rosario. It is still performed there on Good Friday, in the dark, subterranean church, by the uncertain glimmer of a few candles, as a set of instrumental interludes to the words read out as part of the service. It is also played in the cathedrals of Cadiz and Seville.

dressed like baroque pages, dance, sing and clack their castanets in front of the high altar, under the reverend noses of kneeling minor canons.

The Seises, originally six in number as their name implies and now increased to ten, dance to celebrate two of the most important festivals of the Spanish Christian year. These occasions are Corpus Christi and the Immaculate Conception, and the eight days following these feasts; the dance is also performed on the triduo of carnival. Before tracing the history of the ceremony, it will be better to describe it as it may be seen at the present time. The dance (during the octave of Corpus Christi) takes place about six o'clock in the evening, after service. The windows of Seville cathedral, as of nearly all Spanish cathedrals, were designed to let in a certain amount of light without letting in too much sun. They are therefore small and placed high up in the walls. The evening light which came through them brought out clearly the beautiful tracery of the roof, and seemed to be reflected on to what went on beneath; it was only at the very end of the ceremony that discreetly placed electric lights were turned on to make up for the daylight which by that time had faded. There was enough light to make everything clearly and distinctly visible; nothing was mysterious or uncertain.

As the dance of the Seises is a musical entertainment which has many of the features of ballet, it is important to realize what the setting is and how the performance is staged. The background was formed by the gilded retablo behind the altar, with its little groups of carved biblical figures in their niches. In the middle of the retablo was a rectangular, projecting canopy. A golden sun, with a large crown on the top of it and projecting rays on either side, was set in a background of plum-coloured velvet. From the bottom of the sun a pyramid of lighted candles descended to the altar, while in a niche above it was an image of Our Lady, with a mitred saint on either side of her. The dull gold of the retablo and the pyramid of lighted candles lent a marvellous richness to the whole so that it seemed like a piece of embroidery, or like one of those old tapestries which are hung in almost every cathedral in Spain to decorate it for important celebrations and festivals. The altar itself, at the top of a flight of carpeted steps, was draped with a white cloth covered with gold embroidery. At each end of the top step was a lighted candle in a huge silver candlestick, while on the bottom step were six more lighted candles in massive candlesticks of the same pattern. In front of the steps was a square space like a stage; two benches covered with velvet and gold embroidery were placed on each side pointing towards the altar; on the left

were the music stands of the orchestra. The whole *capilla mayor* is enclosed by lofty, gilded iron railings—the magnificent *reja principal* in front and smaller *rejas* at the sides, and it is in this marvellous and incredible golden cage that the dance of the Seises takes place.

The congregation sat in the square space between the choir and the *capilla mayor*. Many of the women wore black *mantillas* with high combs; others had *velos* without combs. A rather bedraggled little person who looked like an overworked kitchen-maid, came into the congregation with nothing on her head. A policeman immediately went up to her and told her to cover her nakedness—which she did with a large purple and white handkerchief. Everyone was fanning himself; men who had no fans used their straw hats. The chanting of the choir behind seemed as if it were built on a ground-bass of the delicate, provocative rattle of the opening and shutting of fans. Away to the right, in the south transept, was the queer nineteenth-century tomb of Columbus, its four stout figures of more than mortal size, looking as if they had grown out of the kings and queens on playing cards and bearing between them a little coffin which seemed, by comparison, as if it could not have held more than a handful of the bones of the greatest and most fortunate of explorers. On the wall beside it towered the figure of St. Christopher like a giant in a fairy-story, with a club as big as a telegraph-pole in one hand and the Christ-child on his back.

The congregation had plenty of time to observe these details before the Seises appeared. Eventually two of them emerged from a little door to the left of the high altar, and began to snuff the candles. Nowadays the dress of a Seis is more or less that of a page of the time of Philip III—clothes which Velázquez might perhaps have worn when he was a boy. But the dress has undergone great changes since the fifteenth century. When, long ago, the children first appeared before the wooden ark, [which was afterwards replaced by the elaborate silver “custodia,”] they were clothed “with the simplicity proper to that remote epoch”—a bare simplicity which the learned chronicler could not altogether veil, even in a mist of sonorous Castilian. The earliest entries in the cathedral ledgers mention almost nothing but wings and garlands; and these, says Don Simón de la Rosa, “would be enough to express the virile culture of a warlike people, not yet infected by the effeminate customs of the pagan renaissance.” These effeminate renaissance customs, however, eventually infected the cathedral chapter; choir-masters in the sixteenth century were instructed to give more novelty and attractiveness to the dance by designing new clothes for it. In 1548 the Seises appeared in the guise







Photo by F. de P. Diaz

*A SEIS*

of pilgrims; in 1556, under the direction of the distinguished composer Francisco Guerrero, some were dressed like little shepherds (*pastorcicos*), others as street singers (*cantorcicos*, or boys who sang in the street). One of the latter had three dozen little bells sewn on to his arms and legs, and the other was provided with cymbals. Guerrero, besides being a competent musician, was also a shrewd impresario. He saw that people were losing interest in a dance of angels, and deliberately set himself to outdo the profane dances of the streets; the main thing in these was, as he knew, the amount of noise they made. There were objections in high quarters to this way of treating the Seises; but it was recognized as being quite in the style of the *maestro*. The dress worn nowadays at Corpus consists of a crimson doublet with yellow stripes, and white satin knee-breeches slashed on the outside to show a crimson and yellow lining; there are white stockings, and white shoes with crimson and yellow laces. A white sash is worn over the right shoulder, ending in a crimson and yellow tassel on the left side. The hat is soft and grey with gold lace and one side turned up; it has a large white plume. For the feast of the Immaculate Conception the dress is of the same pattern, but the crimson is replaced by sky blue—blue, of course, being one of the regular attributes of the Virgin Mary in art.

## II.

The two little Seises who had appeared first, put the candles in order and then, when they thought that no one was looking, lunged at one another with two portable candlesticks. Then they began to arrange the music on the stands. The service was coming to an end, and the organist was finishing it off in innumerable chromatics. Suddenly there was a burst of full organ in broad, simple harmonies; the two Seises started up and fled like fairies when the clock strikes.

The little door on the left of the altar opened again, and two men in ordinary clothes, with straw hats in their hands, came down to the music stands in the left hand corner of the *capilla mayor*. Other members of the orchestra followed; and when they were all assembled the band consisted of flute, clarinet, bassoon, two horns, trombone, three first violins, three seconds, viola, violoncello and two double-basses. Then priests and acolytes gathered in front of the altar as if mass were about to be celebrated. The two portable candlesticks were brought down into the gangway in the midst of the congregation and set up, in clouds of incense, on a

level with the front row. The organ produced a wavering melody on a reed stop of peculiar quality; the candlesticks were picked up by two little boys and carried into the choir. Through the door on the left of the altar the Seises could be seen getting into their places; one of them rehearsed an elaborate bend backwards and was punched from behind by another. The organist played a full close in C major.

The ten Seises entered the capilla in procession, with their hats in their hands. They lined up in front of the high altar and fell upon their knees. Then they came down the steps towards the velvet benches on the "stage" and knelt behind them. A burst of G major came from the organ; the plainsong ended. There was a faint clack of a castanet in nervous fingers. The organ gave an A, and the instruments scraped and blew for a moment to see whether they were in tune. Then the priests and deacons who had been officiating in the choir passed up the aisle, in a solemn procession of candles and red and purple cassocks, to the *capilla mayor*. Some of the oldest and baldest of them knelt in a row behind the second of the velvet-covered benches while the little boys, in their baroque garments, were sitting in front of them. Old age was on its knees before youth.

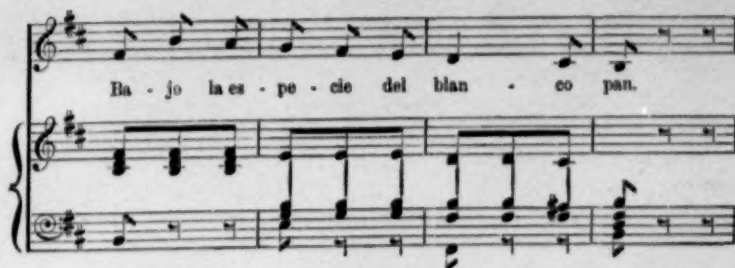
The band played a short prelude in D major. The music changed to the minor; the Seises rose to their feet and stood in front of the benches, while the old gentlemen in purple robes still knelt before them. The Seises knelt, too, for a moment; then they put on their plumed hats. The band returned to the major mode and the little boys moved forward, singing. They moved back again, then forward, then passed each other and changed sides. The music went back to the minor, and became more animated and more rhythmical in a quick 3-time measure:

*Allegro.* *Bis.*

O dul - ce a - ma - do  
Sa - cra - men - ta - do

*Tutti. Str.* *Fl. Cl.*

The musical score is written for a 3/8 time signature in D major. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a string section labeled 'Tutti. Str.', and woodwind parts labeled 'Fl. Cl.'. The tempo is marked 'Allegro.' and there is a 'Bis.' section. The lyrics are 'O dul - ce a - ma - do' and 'Sa - cra - men - ta - do'. The string part is marked 'Tutti. Str.' and the woodwind part is marked 'Fl. Cl.'.



The Seises, however, went on dancing and singing in much the same grave and dignified manner as before. Now they stood in two lines pointing towards the high altar; now they swayed from side to side in two lines across the stage; now they accomplished a figure which resembled the "grand chain" in the Lancers—and is, in fact, known as the *cadena grande*. Then they stopped singing and began to clack their castanets:



The slow dance movements still went on, and the figures—the lines which approached, receded, mingled and dissolved—were still displayed in their unvarying gravity and regularity. The band returned to the major and repeated a few bars of the prelude. The castanets ceased and the singing began again. It was good singing—smooth, flexible and in tune; but the voices, like nearly all boys' voices on the Continent, sounded as if the singers never properly opened their mouths. The band fell into a new key and a new figure was unravelled—new, but like the others composed of the same slowly advancing lines, breaking, re-forming, turning, scattering. The movements were carried out in a very musicianly fashion; you felt that they were a result of the music and not an accompaniment to it. The castanets began again, and a number of clerics entered from a door on the right-hand side of the altar.



The dance ended. The plumed hats were pulled off; the little boys went up to the altar and knelt in a row on the top step. There was a clash of bells from the Giralda tower; the band broke into D major and the Seises vanished as if by magic, leaving two of their number on their knees in front of the high altar. A chorus of men's voices was heard; before the altar priests and acolytes disposed themselves as for mass, and the last two Seises disappeared.

The bells still went on, and the singing. At one moment it was a tenor solo, with the other voices joining in at intervals: at another the band had several bars to itself. Still the bells went on, and suddenly everyone fell on their knees. The tenor, however, went on singing; the band played and the bells rang. An Amen was sung, and people seated themselves again. The ceremony ended



in a confused, magnificent jangle of bells, voices, strings and organ.

### III.

A musical performance as curious and as beautiful as the Dance of the Seises will naturally raise various questions which are not all of them easy to answer. How long has it been going on, and why are the dancers called "Seises?" Do the modern performances differ to any great extent from those in ancient times, and who wrote the music? Again, are there any other dances of the same kind still existing, and what is the origin and meaning of them?

"The custom of employing choir-boys (says Jerónimo Román, in his *Republica Christiana*) came from the boys who went before the Redeemer, singing his praises on the day that he entered into Jerusalem. And this the church did too, because, by the singing of those who were most pure in thought and deed, the prayer was made more acceptable; and the people lifted up their hearts, remembering that the angels whom the boys represented stood before God and praised him." The institution was sanctified by martyrdom. Victor of Utica offers us the shocking but sublime spectacle of the twelve choir-boys of Carthage, massacred by the Vandals for refusing to embrace the Aryan heresy; they were afterwards to be known as the "New Choir of the Twelve Apostles," and their protection was invoked on certain occasions by those who were in danger of falling into the deadly sin of heresy. Boys were employed in the Parisian church in the sixth century, and Venantius Fortunatus described their performance in elegant latin elegiacs:

Hinc puer exiguis attemperat organa cannis,  
Inde senex largam ructat ab ore tubam . . .

With the conquest of Seville by St. Ferdinand in 1248, choir-boys were introduced along with other Christian practices. A bull of Innocent IV (1281) laid down the establishment and organization of the cathedral services, and approved the payment to the singers—choir-boys and old men—of one thousand maravedis. The two models for church choirs, as D. Simón de la Rosa has pointed out, are the angels who sang in Bethlehem (Luke, ii, 14) and the twenty-four old men of the Revelation (xix, 4) whom St. John heard repeating an endless alleluja. The Bulls *Ad exequendum* of Eugenius IV (1439) and *Votis illis* of Nicholas V (1454) established a choir on these lines in the cathedral at Seville. The interesting point about the bull of Eugenius IV is that it refers definitely to six boys

(*seis niños*) and makes arrangements for their housing and education.

There were, then, six choir-boys in the cathedral of Seville in the fifteenth century; but there is no documentary evidence of a dance of the Seises until 1508. Yet from the earliest times dancing had been a popular form of celebration at Seville. In the thirteenth century, in the time of St. Ferdinand, there were sword-dances and dances of masked men and women. And particularly on the 15th August—an old Pagan festival which was afterwards allotted to the feast of the Assumption—there were dances in the Court of Orange Trees, an enclosure which corresponds, in a way, with the close of an English cathedral. The annals refer to dances being held in 1260 before the tomb of St. Ferdinand, on the anniversary of his death; the entry of Alonso XI in 1328 was celebrated by a dance of giants and sword dances.

It would be odd indeed if Christianity alone among religions, could furnish no examples of ritual dancing, and dancing seems very early to have passed into evangelical law. The nuptial dance, in so far as it formed part of the ecclesiastical ceremony of marriage, was definitely forbidden. St. Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Philostratus and the Council of Laodicea alike condemned it as a danger to Christian morals; while the Council of Lérida, in 524, reiterated the prohibition with special reference to Spain. Yet the practice of dancing crept insidiously into the Spanish church, in spite of the resolutions of Councils and the fulminations of the Fathers. When, according to La Rosa, the early Christians accepted music as a legitimate manifestation of their cult, they formed the habit of moving their feet alternately while singing the Psalms. There are stories of monks dancing in monasteries during certain celebrations; and Père Menestrier, who travelled far and wide before writing *Des Ballets anciens et modernes* (Paris: 1682) relates that he saw in some cathedrals, on the day of Pentecost, the canons dancing rhythmically in the choir, along with acolytes and other minor ministers of the divine office. Moreover St. Pascual, in monastic seclusion at Valencia, expressed the beatific jubilation of his soul by dancing ceaselessly before the image of Our Lady. "His forehead glowed with light, so that a monk of his order, who had observed him and wished to restrain him, remained powerless in his presence, unable to utter a word."

As the primitive religious dances became more developed and more artistic, there arose once more a movement for their suppression. Someone described the dance as a circle at the centre of which was Satan. St. Juan de Ávila found with astonishment that even the saraband—the most abused of all renaissance dances—

was performed at Seville during the festival of Corpus. Priests themselves set the example, "capering with devout gaiety," as David did before the Ark of the Covenant. That dancing in church was a regular if unrecognized practice is shewn by the statutes which St. Juan de Ribera drew up for his college at Valencia. Dancing in the church and dramatic representation were definitely prohibited, even during the festival of Corpus; and the founder of the University of Seville, Rodrigo Fernández de Santaella, forbade all kinds of dancing and *pulsaciones de instrumentos músicos*. Religious dancing was finally condemned by the Synod of Toledo in 1589; and though there are rumours of dances having been seen in the cathedral of Toledo itself as late as the eighteenth century, the decree seems, as far as the rest of Spain was concerned, to have been made absolute. Only in Seville did the dance of the Seises persist, and there may be a reason for this. The dances in other cathedrals, Toledo included, had been dances arranged and performed by members of the various guilds, which paraded the streets at Corpus, and other important festivals; they were profane in their origin and dubious in their effects. The primitive austerity of Castilian morals had been somewhat relaxed, and with the spread of Renaissance ideas it had become usual for women to join the dance as well as men.

The dance of the Seises, on the other hand, had been for so long a church festival that it was forgotten whether it had ever had a pagan origin. And as it was never danced by anybody but innocent urchins between the ages of ten and fourteen, it is hard to see where the harm in it lay. One tiresome and officious prelate,—an ugly and unsympathetic old gentleman, to judge from his portrait—did indeed try to have the dance of the Seises suppressed; but the point to which he objected was not the evil moral effect of dancing but the fact that the Seises put on their hats in presence of the Holy Sacrament. Only Spanish grandees had the privilege, on certain occasions, of covering themselves in the presence of the King of Spain; it was not seemly that a troop of noisy little boys should put on their hats and dance about in the presence of the King of Heaven.

#### IV.

The earliest documentary evidence for the dance of the Seises belongs to the year 1508. In the *Libro de Veedor*, the overseer's book of that date, occurs the entry:

Item. Paid the *cantorillos* who sang and danced for the procession of Corpus Christi . . .

D. Simón de la Rosa, who has had access to all the records, considers the dance to be earlier than this. The entries in 1508 and the succeeding years seem to refer to a custom already established, and can hardly be used for something which was being done for the first time. From the very beginning the Seises differed from the profane dancers in the streets. They danced without masks; and instead of having to represent animals, warriors or devils, or mask themselves as Moors or Giants, they appeared before the Holy Sacrament in a state of rude simplicity. At other times the Seises dressed up, it is true, and took part in dramatic representations at Christmas and other festivals. They sang *villancicos* (carols) in other costumes; but their dance was always regarded as something special and apart from all other functions, with its own particular dress and ceremonial. It was, for them, a more important thing than the *autos sacramentales* (by Calderón amongst others), in which they took part from 1579 until the suppression of *autos* by the zealous but egregious Bishop Palafox, alluded to before. An *auto sacramental* was, of course, an opera, the essential thing about it being that it was an expression—a musical and plastic representation, and after that, a poetical one—of the mystery of the eucharist. It had always been a feature of the celebrations of Corpus Christi; the various scenes were usually set on waggons which were "opened" when the scene which they represented was about to begin. The reason why even the best *autos* are almost unreadable nowadays is that the words are only the libretto. It is faintly possible to imagine the scene—the *plaza mayor* of an old Castilian town with much the same sort of people who come in from the country for a modern fair, gathered round the various waggons in the middle of the square. But without the music, which in most cases has been lost, it is often difficult to realise what effect even Calderón himself was really aiming at. The dance of the Seises, in spite of the changes which it has undergone, gives us a musical and plastic representation of people's attitude towards the mystery of the Holy Sacrament.

La Rosa's researches have revealed the curious fact that there is no record of a dance of the Seises being danced by only six little boys. The boys have been called "Seises" in the cathedral ledgers from 1570 onwards; they may have been called so from the time of the bull of 1251 which established cathedral choirs with six boys and a number of men; but all the evidence goes to show that the dance has always been performed by more than six "Seises." From the cathedral ledgers the numbers at different periods have been determined. After 1508, in which year an unspecified number of little boys (*cantorillos*) were paid for dancing as well as singing on the Feast of Corpus, entries occur like the following:

1512. 11 choir-boys (*mozos de capilla cantorcicos*) with garlands.  
 1532. 6 *mozos cantorcicos* and an unspecified number of dancers.  
 1555. 8 *niños* (boys) *cantorcicos*.  
 1556 and 7. 6 *cantorcicos* and 2 *pastorcicos* (the boys dressed as shepherds referred to above).  
 1565. 10 *niños cantorcicos*.  
 1576-90. 6 *cantorcicos* and 4 dancers.

In the seventeenth century there were always ten dancers, except on certain festivals of the Immaculate Conception, when there were twelve. Ten has remained the regulation number ever since. La Rosa makes the ingenious suggestion that the dance began when a body of more than six "Seises" was instituted; that is, the dance dates from before 1439.

The dress remains substantially as it was in the seventeenth century, though slight modifications have been introduced from time to time, especially by Eslava who was *Maestro de Capilla* from 1832 to 1847. The story that the clothes must always be patched and never renewed—that permission for the dance to take place would only last as long as the suits which were being worn when it was first granted—is a tale with no foundation on fact. The *Libros de fábrica* and the cathedral accounts make it quite clear that the boys have had new clothes whenever it has been necessary. On close examination, indeed, they seem to be a great deal newer and smarter than the gorgeous vestments of the *monaguillos* who carry the candles; the garments worn by these urchins, when you see them from close by, look so old and dirty that they might have been worn from the earliest times of the primitive Christian church. The ledgers mention a kind of cloth called *sempiterna* which was imported from Flanders and worn by the Seises in the seventeenth century, and this may have suggested the story that the boys never had new clothes.

Gifts and benefactions have been made to the Seises, as one would expect. The most generous were Don Mateo Vázquez de Leca, archdeacon of Carmona, and Don Gonzalo Núñez de Sepúlveda through whose generosity in the early part of the seventeenth century, the dances at Corpus and the Inmaculada took the form they have preserved with slight alterations down to the present time. Núñez de Sepúlveda was a kind-hearted old gentleman who suffered from gout. He was especially interested in the dance for the Immaculate Conception, and bequeathed 150,000 ducats for decorations, and twelve blue and gold suits for the Seises, like those worn nowadays for the dance in December. He was always carried to the cathedral to see the dance, and never missed it to the day of his death in 1655.



Castanets are not mentioned until 1677. But a hundred years before this, one of the boys played small cymbals and bells, and in 1544 one of the dancers "kept the time" with a rebeck. Of the figures of the dance, a rough indication has already been given; of their mystical significance, every spectator must make what he can. The figures are said to be traditional; and probably are so, in the same sense as the dress worn by the dancers—that is, they date from the first part of the seventeenth century, when the dance, as it is performed now, seems to have been finally evolved.

## V.

But (it will be asked) what about the music? For the dance of the Seises is above all a musical entertainment, and the affinities of it are clearly with opera and ballet. Knowing that the dance has been going on since 1508, and that it has been danced very nearly in its present form since the beginning of the seventeenth century—knowing too that the *Maestro de Capilla* has always been in charge of it, and that musicians like Guerrero and Eslava have held the post of *Maestro de Capilla*—one might expect to find some precious survival of music from other times, preserved by custom and periodic performance and made more vivid and alive than any known piece of ancient music.

Alas, the music performed nowadays is not earlier than the nineteenth century. Four settings are in use—those of Andrevi, Eslava, Torres García and the present *Maestro de Capilla*, D. Eduardo Torres. Further, none of the earlier versions of the music have been preserved, or have, at anyrate, been identified. Andrevi's score (1829–30) is the earliest which is definitely marked "Dance of the Seises": and *Maestro Torres*, after diligent search in the musical archives, was unable to find any music which could be considered with any degree of certainty as being the score of a former dance of the Seises.\* What the music of the first dance may have been like, in 1508, may be gathered from the motets and villancicos printed in Barbieri's *Cancionero musical de los siglos XV y XVI* (Madrid: 1890), or from Morphy's *Les Luthistes Espagnols* (Breitkopf and Härtel: 1902). Secular Spanish music, in the polyphonic style and of the seventeenth century, is to be found in the *Cancionero musical y poetico del siglo XVII*, lately edited by D. Jesus Aroca (Madrid: 1918); which though consisting entirely of unaccompanied vocal music contains many *folias* and other com-

\* The musical archives were undergoing a spring clean when I was in Seville and it was impossible to find anything.



positions to which it would be possible to dance. Yet the fact remains that not a note of the dance-music of the Seises of the sixteenth, seventeenth or eighteenth centuries has been identified; and the difficulties of arranging a modern *baile* with scraps of old music seem well nigh insuperable, when regarded from the point of view of the *Maestro de Capilla*, who has to arrange it, teach it, get it done and make it a success. In Seville, and in Spain generally, there is little or no antiquarian feeling for secular music: \* it never occurs to anyone to perform plays by Calderón, or Lope de Vega with contemporary music as well as with contemporary dress. If Sr. Torres were to produce a dance of the Seises with music arranged from composers of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, there would probably be such an outcry that he would never hear the last of it. If he were to compose a *baile* in the style of Ravel or De Falla it would appear a far less revolutionary thing to do.

Among the great Spanish composers of polyphonic music, Cristóbal Morales, though born in Seville in the last decade of the fifteenth century, was never *Maestro de Capilla* there. Of the known works of Guerrero there does not appear to be anything which could have been used as a dance for the Seises. His *Canciones y Villanescas espirituales . . . a tres, cuatro, cinco bozes* (Venice: 1589) seem to be more likely than the others. The terms of the bequest of Don Mateo Vázquez de Leca in 1613 have been taken to mean that, since that date, the *Maestro de Capilla* has been expected to compose music for the Seises as well as teach it. Sr. Torres believes that the music played during the dances in ancient times belonged to the class of composition named *villancicos* which may most conveniently be translated "carols," but which were used on other occasions besides Christmas. Originally a form of verse, and then the sort of music which went with it, the *villancico* became in the eighteenth century a highly organized piece of music, with solos and chorus and instruments. Large numbers of these are preserved in the musical archives at the Escorial, and are sometimes performed there. The modern Dance of the Seises does not differ greatly in form from some existing *villancicos*; and it is quite likely that the dances, in ancient times, were accompanied by two or three separate *villancicos*, out of which the present, compound form was evolved. *Villancicos*† are said to exist, composed by Juan Sanz (1657); and Diego José de Salazar, who had himself

\* There is Sr. Pedrell at Barcelona; but he has never been appreciated at his true value. His attitude to music is, one might say, too "English" for most of his countrymen. Among the few other men who had a real sense of musical scholarship, are Cecilio de Roda who is dead and Sr. Mitjana who is ambassador at Stockholm.

† I have, unfortunately, been unable to examine any of these *Villancicos* by Sevillian composers.





The composer who more than any other set the impress of his personality on the dance of the Seises was Hilarion Eslava. This vigorous Navarrés who was born near Pampeluna in 1807 and served his apprenticeship first as a choir-boy and then as a violinist, was appointed Maestro de Capilla at Seville in 1832. He was immensely interested in the dance of the Seises. He composed ten *bailes*\* for them, and introduced certain modifications into the dress. His delicate Donizettian strains are by this time sufficiently remote from our epoch to fit in fairly well with the old-world garments worn by the dancers, and yet are not so archaic as to be unintelligible to the great majority of the faithful. Torres García, who held the office of Maestro de Capilla for the last forty years of the nineteenth century, is always spoken of affectionately as "Don Evaristo." He composed nine *bailes* for the Seises; but his music sounds too "ancient and modern" to be of interest to us now.

Writing music for the Seises is not an enviable task. The Eslava-tradition lies heavily on Seville cathedral; it is the sort of music which people like to hear and it is the sort of music which can be taught with no great difficulty and with the certainty of its being effective in performance. The fragments of the *Baile* by D. Eduardo Torres, which have been given earlier in this article, have not been printed before, and were written out specially for readers of *Music and Letters* by the Maestro himself.

## VI.

The Seises of the Cathedral of Seville are the most important and perhaps the most interesting survivors of a custom which was once widespread in Spanish cathedrals. Their nearest living relatives seem to be the six dancers of Santa Orosia at Jaca, a little Aragonese town in the Pyrenees, the terminus of the railway from Saragossa

\* Two of these have been published ("Baile de Seises . . ." por D. Hilarion Eslava, Ed. Augustin Lerat: Canovas de Castillo 65, Seville. 2 ptas. 50 c. each) and are easily obtainable.

danced as a Seis, wrote *Villancicos que se cantaron en los maitines de la Purísima Concepción*. He died in 1709.

The words which the Seises sang in their dance in 1690 have been preserved. They were written at a time when every effort was being made to suppress the dance, and are from beginning to end an enthusiastic panegyric of the ceremony, a sort of gloss on the words of the celebrated bull of Urban IV, *Transiturum de hoc Mundo*, which established the festival of Corpus Christi and which invited the faithful to "sing to Faith, dance to Hope, and leap for joy to Charity." The poem is definitely described as a *Villancico*, and is headed: *Letra del tercero villancico que en sus bailes cantaron los niños Seises . . . 1690.\** The Maestro de Capilla at the time was Juan Donoso Cabeza, who afterwards published his "book of words" as *Letras de los Villancicos que en los solemnnes Maytines de la Resurrección de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo cantaron los niños Seises . . . 1706*. Among eighteenth-century *Maestros de Capilla*, who must have written music for the Seises if only it could be identified, were Antonio Ripa (Maestro de Capilla, 1768-98), composer of twenty-nine *Villancicos de Concepción*, the words of some of them being printed in 1774. Domingo Arquimbau, master from 1795 till 1829, enjoyed great reputation in Seville owing to the fact that he had taken the degree of Mus. Doc. in England; where he took it I have not yet been able to discover. He was a prolific and successful composer of church-music, and his sprightly *villancicos* for Corpus and Conception, may well have been danced and sung by the Seises.

Francisco Xavier Andrevi, who like the present Maestro de Capilla was a Valencian, was at Seville only for a year (1829-30). But he composed two *Bailes de los Seises*, using an orchestra of the same size and constitution as is employed to-day. The following example will give an idea of his style:



\* Words of the third villancico which the Seises sang during their dance . . .



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and Huesca. They have been described by Pedrell and by La Rosa. Every year on the 25th June, the anniversary of the "invention" of the relics of the saint, the dancers perform in the cathedral. They wear white robes, loose breeches, and a short jacket adorned with sashes of various colours. The music is produced by an ancient flute, made (according to tradition) by a wandering shepherd, and a kind of psaltery with six strings, played with a plectrum. The music has been described as of great antiquity or, again, as resembling a minuet. It would be well worth the while of any reader of *Music and Letters* who found himself in the Pyrenees in June to make an excursion to Jaca and find out exactly what happens.

Another dance, overlooked by all who have written on the Seises, is that of the *Cossiés* in Majorca. At carnival, on the festivals of the Assumption (15th August) and St. Roch (16th August), and on other occasions, appear six boys, rather older than the Seises, with white clothes and coloured sashes and flowers in their caps. One of the boys is dressed as a woman; he carries a bunch of flowers in one hand and a coloured handkerchief in the other, and is known as "La Dama." After taking part in the procession on the 15th August they dance in the cathedral in front of an image of Our Lady; later in the day they dance in front of the high altar, and again next day for the festival of St. Roch. They also dance in the Sacristy.\* Further, there are still some Spanish cathedrals, Palencia for instance, where the giants of the Corpus procession are said to dance actually in the cathedral; but the custom is dying out. In the eighteenth century there were still Seises of some sort at Toledo; although the evidence on the subject is conflicting. Andrés Saa who visited it in 1736 when collecting materials for his *Compendio histórico eclesiástico*, says distinctly:

Before the Holy Sacrament were to be seen six torches born by the six *Seises*. They were dressed in short jackets, and blue breeches of antique pattern adorned with white flowers, and they wore hats, black shoes

\* The dances in the churches at Alaró and Felanitx (Majorca) are dying out. I visited Alaró this last year to see the dance; but there had been a strike of shoemakers, and as nearly everyone in the village is a shoemaker and was on strike, the Mayor thought that the festival had better be simplified and the dance abandoned.—J.B.T.

The sword dance at Briançon, or rather at Pont de Cervières, called "Ba'cubert" (= *bal couvert*), is danced in the open, but a shelter is put up for the occasion, suggesting that, as the name also implies, it was at one time danced under cover. It is also on St. Roch's day, and it is alluded to in early documents as "*le veu*," having been instituted in honour of St. Roch, the patron saint of plague victims, after the terrible visitations of the 14th and 15th centuries. The Mystery at Oberammergau had a similar reason for its institution. (See *Le Ba'cubert*, Raphaël Blanchard, Paris, 1914).—[Ed.]



and white stockings. They danced in the choir in the afternoon, to a tune very much in the Spanish style, which was played on a pipe by a man wearing a ruff.

This dance, and those referred to above, seem not to have been danced by choir-boys, but by members of one of the guilds or companies of the city.

There were, however, Seises in Valencia up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. These were boys belonging to the *Real Colegio de Corpus Christi* founded by San Juan de Ribera, and their dance was performed in front of the Holy Sacrament. The music of one of the *Bailes* (by Comas) is said to be preserved in an incomplete form, but I have had no opportunity of examining it. There are, in the archives of the college, receipts for money paid to the masters who taught the *infantillos* to dance for the Corpus festivities; and there are said to exist some "motets," the stanzas (in very bad verse) ending a refrain, in which the words *toro, toro* are repeated over and over again. There was evidently an allegorical dance in which the little boys pretended to fight the Devil as if he were a bull, and during the *corrida* kept running up to the "bull" and then taking refuge behind the Holy Sacrament. These dances were dropped during the wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It should be noted that they had never been held in church but in the cloister, yet there are one or two references to dancing in Valencia in the churches themselves, on occasions of particular solemnity and importance.

The Seises are related with another curious practice. They seem to have fulfilled the same artistic or emotional needs as the vanished custom of electing a Boy-Bishop on Innocents' Day—a custom which, it is said, still exists in some form at Osuna, near Seville.\* In some other Spanish cathedrals it is the custom on Innocents' Day to hand over the musical direction to a choir-boy, and in certain seminaries and colleges on that day a small boy is chosen by the others to be headmaster. Connected with this may be the queer practice of some small Spanish theatres in which Innocents' Day is observed by actors and actresses changing their parts; and, to return to the church once more, there is the Sybil of the Cathedral of Palma (Majorca), a choir-boy who at Christmas time is arrayed in the traditional Sibylline garments, and, mounted on a practicable eminence, sings one of the most interesting and most curious known pieces of early Spanish music. As a compo-

\* It also exists at Berder, in Essex, in the celebrations of St. Nicholas Day (December 6). The reader who has a working knowledge of Spanish should consult the entertaining documents reprinted in La Rosa's book on the Seises.

sition which is still performed it can only be compared with the melopoeia sung by the boy who takes the part of the Blessed Virgin in the Mystery of Elche.\* And lastly, as children dancing in front of the altar, the Seises are only doing what many Spanish children do when they dance in front of the May altar (*Cruz de Mayo*) in their own homes; one is reminded, two, of the charming story of the Virgin Mary who, on being presented in the temple at the age of three, began to dance when she reached the top step leading to the altar.

The survival of the dance of the Seises has been due to various causes. First and foremost is the interest which the people of Seville have always taken in it, and the fact that at critical moments when authority was endeavouring to suppress the dance, the Dean and Chapter stood on the side of the people and against the Bishop. Again, there is the fact that the dance has been gradually altered as time went on, and that owing to the testamentary dispositions of its benefactors, each new choir-master has had to compose new—or at least original—music for it. This has prevented the dance from being accompanied by archaic music which most of the congregation would not have been able to understand; and musicians, who would give much for the indescribable thrill of hearing the old music made to live again with the movements of the dance in its original surroundings, must admit that it is mainly because the music is intelligible to everyone that the dance has survived to the present day. The Dance of the Seises then, like the Mystery of Elche, is not merely an antiquarian curiosity. It is a survival which has not lost all its musical interest and one which neither time nor war, nor intolerance nor stupidity, have ever quite been able to destroy.

J. B. TREND.

SEGOVIA, *July*, 1920.

\* See *Music and Letters*, vol. I. No. 2.

## THREE CENTENARIES

JENNY LIND, PAULINE VIARDOT-GARCIA,  
GEORGE GROVE

THE world of music may be divided roughly into two sections, those who work for their art, and those who work for themselves. So have those who create music been humorously divided into those who compose, and those who decompose. Of the two divisions of artists, the unselfish is (as most good things are) by many degrees the rarer, but it secures the larger power, and the larger fame. The last hundred years have not lacked artists whose ideals have been as high as their influence is far-reaching. Some examples come at once to the mind. Any composer, whose works have lasted one hundred years, and still hold the public taste, belongs to the better race. We need not individualise such men, they proclaim themselves. With reproductive artists, it is different, the man who works for himself is in the majority, he who works for music in the minority; but in the latter case, we have abiding influence, in the former but names. No violinist ever took first rank by reason of the instrument upon which he played. Many a singer has lived in history by the instrument which was physically in his throat. No pianist has survived over and above his contemporaries, because he happened to play on a Pleyel or a Broadwood, on a Bechstein or a Steinway, but by the interpretation of music which he gave upon any pianoforte. Such survivals are, in comparison with the hosts of players and singers, few but striking. Singing appears to be the only branch of music, in which the instrument counts for more than the person who plays upon it, or the manner of the playing. The key to the whole position is to be found in a little commonplace book (now printed) in which Brahms jotted down the sayings and writings of men which impressed him,—the sentence in question is by Joachim and (translated) as follows:—“Artists are the priests, not the servitors of the public.” In other words, their business is to direct taste, not to follow it, to give the lead to their hearers of what they ought to like to hear, and not to play flimsy or inferior work merely because the public, perhaps after one hearing, momentarily prefers it. I may specify some of

these departed artists of the highest ideals, chief amongst them Joachim and Hans von Bülow. Liszt was a curious blend of both, with a strong bias to the right side. Clara Schumann was above proof: so even in his purely executive capacity, was Sterndale Bennett. So was Neruda. So were many of our great organists, such as S. S. Wesley. In the world of singers, the cases are rarer, and instances of what I may term artistic selfishness are largely in the majority. Who can recall a single action for the good of music as distinct from the display of voice of Catalani, of Alboni, of Tamberlik? Even Patti, with all Europe at her feet, had the power in her grasp of being a priestess of her art and she became a servant of the public, inducing them to hear her in Mozart, not Mozart in her, and popularising as the highest form of art "Home, Sweet Home" and "Coming thro' the Rye." She had a perfect instrument on which she played with perfect technique; but the results musically were equivalent to those of a first-rate violinist who confined his efforts to the Fantasias of de Bériot and Ernst. If only singers of the first calibre, who hold the public in their hands, no matter what they sing, were to use the great power they hold to disseminate the best music, instead of wrapping their talent in a napkin, how different would the taste of the public have become! They might not get an encore for the high note at the end (which the composer probably eschewed) but they would gain immensely by singing a fine work as the composer (a better judge of what he meant) intended it to be produced; and the hearer would take the absence of merely vocal display as an artistic conviction, for he knows that the performer can sing the high note quite easily if the music demands it. Sims Reeves even changed the end of "Thou shalt dash them" in the *Messiah* to a high note to secure a round of applause, not for the sake of Handel, who knew what he was about when he put his high note climax on "dash them" and not on the "potter's vessel." If Handel had heard this vandalism, he would have treated Reeves as he did the recalcitrant soprano Cuzzoni. In connection with this much belauded tenor, I may recite an experience of Charles Hallé, who had engaged and announced him with Tietjens and other singers for a concert in Manchester. The rehearsal began, but no Reeves appeared. To explain his absence a note arrived, saying that he was unwell and confined to bed at his hotel. Hallé knew better, went straight to his room, and found that the illness was caused by the tenor's contention that his name was in smaller letters on the posters than those of his colleagues. Hallé was equal to the occasion, procured a poster and a foot rule, returned with them to Reeves's room, and gave me a most humorous description of Reeves

crawling over the floor in primitive attire, and measuring the letters by the rule. Finding, as Hallé knew, that the letters were of identical size, he dressed and sang. When conductors choose to doctor great works as Mahler did by adding three horns, trombones and a tuba to the funeral march in the Eroica Symphony, they are on the same reprehensible lines, but even they have not got so far as to alter the ending of the "Coriolan" overture to a *fortissimo*; a course which Costa himself would have approved, for he told Grove that he "would never play it again with that *pianissimo* ending!"

From these vagaries, let us turn to those singers of the past, who had their music in mind rather than themselves, who used the voice which divine Nature had given them for the glory of divine art, and their great influence (the greatest perhaps of all artists by reason of the size of the public to which they appeal) to spread and to widen the taste for the best music, unfamiliar as well as familiar. They are few, but their names are household words.

First and greatest, Jenny Lind, born a hundred years ago. Then Pauline Viardot-Garcia, her junior by a year, queen amongst contraltos, who, with a voice far less striking than that of Alboni, survives her contemporary in history, and surpasses her in mastery. Lablache, incomparable in Mozart, who had so deep a reverence for Beethoven, that he, French-Neapolitan and Irish though he was, hastened to be present at his funeral. Sontag was of them, Belletti for them. Stockhausen was a tower of strength. The number now-a-days is rising, but not fast enough. Of these singers two especially demand, at this moment of their centenary, our remembrance, our thanks, and our most pious memory,—Jenny Lind, and Pauline Viardot-Garcia—Jenny Lind, in especial, as being essentially connected with England. On October 6th, 1820, she, the greatest singer of her day, was born at Stockholm. For those, now unhappily few in number, who heard her at her best, she is unforgettable. She was born at a time when the singing and the singer were first and the rest nowhere, but she triumphed over the surroundings of her time and became a chief factor in helping the cause of music rather than in seeking personal display. She began on the stage, but she left it when she found it was saturated with jealousies and intrigues. She owed her beginnings to Lindblad, and to Manuel Garcia. She was supreme in Mozart, but went through her little purgatories of lesser men. She sang Bellini and Donizetti to the manner born, and Meyerbeer to his own supreme satisfaction, but her heart was elsewhere, and her heart got the best of it. She learnt to know what great music was from Mendelssohn and Schumann, and she became one of the protagonists



for Sebastian Bach. A curious personality, often crude, always human; with strong dislikes and stronger sympathies; she repelled an advance one minute to welcome it the next (if it deserved a welcome), she expressed her loathing of bad tendencies, in no measured terms, and her love for the genuine and beautiful, with as whole a heart. She had an instinctive admiration for Schumann, and was wider in her views about him than was her friend, Felix Mendelssohn. So warmheartedly did she espouse his cause, that when he visited Vienna with Clara, and it came to her ears that the Austrians had slighted them and thereby threatened their means of livelihood, she went straight to the capital and herself gave a benefit concert for them and with them, which entirely changed their fortunes and the public taste. The production of *Paradise and the Peri* owed much to her help. In later days, she never failed to fight his battles in England, and to get his works known. With Wagner, she had no sympathy. Not that she denied his genius but she knew too much of him and his ways, and she hated (she was "a good hater") the sensuality which was part and parcel of his nature. She was repelled by *Tannhäuser*, she never indeed got over the feeling which animated the Overture, and which she considered to be a sin against the purest of the arts. Prejudice, a feeling to which she was human enough to succumb, made her see Wagner's other side—and he had one, as the *Meistersinger* proves—through coloured spectacles: but she was not alone in this 'galère.' A woman of Jenny Lind's high ideals would never forgive or forget. It is to her credit, not to her disadvantage. But her dislike of Wagner was accentuated by her dislike of the Teutonic style of singing which his compositions almost necessitated. She was purely Italian in her method. Such vocal (or unvocal) passages as "Heil, Königin, dir, dir soll mein Lied ertönen" would revolt her sense of fitness. She was right. Even Tichatschek could not sing it save by interpolating a syllable: 'Heil, Kövenigin, dir, dir soll mein Lied ertövenen' for which he became a byword in the profession. Her sympathies were wholly with Italian vocalization. It must be remembered that Jenny Lind lived at a time when English singing and the singing of English was far different from now; when the subtleties of English declamation were entirely neglected, when all young singers (and amateurs) were educated and brought up to believe the mischievous heresy that their own language was out of the running; that the magnificence of the English speech, which was good enough for the Bible, for Shakespeare, and for Milton, was for singers *anathema*. To this false doctrine Jenny Lind did not subscribe. Her English was never (even in ordinary conversation) pure. But it was always clear.



He active sympathies were always with defined declamation, even when she herself did not attain to its purity as far as English was concerned. But this is not surprising when we remember that nearly all the masters of singing available in her day were foreigners, and from this very fact naturally precluded from appreciating the innumerable modifications of our vowel sounds.

She was a constant fighter for perfection of technique to precede the tackling of songs or rôles. A memorandum which she sent to the late Sir George Grove when the Royal College was founded, and when she was invited by him to accept the chief post in the singing department, proves this to the hilt. In it she also insisted on the importance of a training in vocal *ensemble*, surely not less important than the *ensemble* of strings and wind; on declamation, and on a system foreshadowing the teaching of technique in classes, under one chief, which is now the main policy of a body of recent origin, the Society of English Singers. She ensured some (unfortunately not all) of her tenets by her nomination of that admirable artist and teacher, Deacon, as her chief lieutenant.

Her great contemporary, Pauline Viardot-Garcia, lived for the most part in Paris, but kept close touch with Schumann by her frequent visits to Baden-Baden, where Clara was living. It was there that she sung for the first time from manuscript the alto Rhapsody of Brahms. She was intimate with Meyerbeer, whose *Fidès* she created, not without sacrificing a disfiguring front tooth, on the extraction of which Meyerbeer insisted before the performance: rewarding her pluck by setting it as an enamel in diamonds, and presenting it to her at the performance. She was not enthusiastic about his methods, his arrangements with the *chef de clique*, and the scene-shifters from whom he expected the whistling of his tunes. Gluck was her hobby, as Bach was Jenny Lind's, and like her, she was a whole-hearted admirer of Schumann. Her mastery of French literature was phenomenal; she was also the close friend of Tourgénéiev.

From these great artists, we turn to the third figure of the 1820-1821 centenary, as remarkable as either of them, though always, in position but not in practice, an amateur in the best sense, George Grove. Few Englishmen have been more universal in their sympathies, and more active in their developments than he. Engineer by profession, he laid out Chester station for the L. and N.W.R. and was first lieutenant to Stephenson in erecting the Britannia Tubular Bridge. Explorer by circumstances, he carried his efforts to Palestine: musician by nature, he did more for the art while Secretary of the Crystal Palace than any man of his time. His life (by C. L. Graves) is as fascinating as its subject, and it is un-

necessary to add to its vivid pages. His engineering developed into the mastery of men ; his exploration into the discovery of the forgotten treasures of Schubert ; his musicianship into the foundation and control of a great music school. Like the two singers we have mentioned, he was not physically beautiful, but he had, in common with them, a charm and fascination, which was far superior to regular good looks. He was once admirably described, by one who saw him crossing the transept of the Crystal Palace, as "walking with two left legs and somebody else's arms." There are few great advances in art for which we have not to thank him. He fought for everything worth fighting for, Beethoven and Schubert in especial. It was at his earnest request that Parry wrote "Blest pair of Sirens" for the Bach Choir in 1887, when "The glories of our blood and state" was tabooed by the committee and the composer as unsuitable in its words for the Queen's Jubilee year. He made many other suggestions to Parry which resulted in such works as *Job* and *King Saul* ; for he was always, like Henry Bradshaw, working for others, rather than himself. In his later years, he laid a sure foundation for English music in his directorship of the Royal College, and qualified for the post by an inaugural speech (unfortunately heard only by a few) which was worthy of Arnold of Rugby at his best. A unique man, whom his friends will ever recall as a living force, and whom future generations will do well to emulate.

C. VILLIERS STANFORD.

## AN ASPECT OF TUDOR COUNTERPOINT

" . . . WHENEVER there was a predominance of Zion, the River of Life, and notes of exclamation, she turned over to the next page ; but any passages in which she saw such promising nouns as 'small-pox,' 'pony,' or 'boots and shoes' at once arrested her."

Such was the method pursued by Mrs. Linnet when reading biographies of celebrated divines—Frost's *Lives of Eminent Christians*, which Samuel Butler found so indispensable, was very likely the book—and George Eliot does not appear to have approved of it.

Neither do I, altogether. But it seems to me that to concentrate on the spiritual experiences and to pass over the mundane ones is an equally mistaken course to choose. The smallpox may have tested the Rev. Mr. McGuffog's moral stamina quite as much as the Doctrine of Election ; and his behaviour in the boots, if they were damp, or the shoes, if they were tight, might have been an even more convincing proof of his Christianity than his most stirring sermon. Apart from these reflections (for some reason or other omitted by George Eliot), I believe that the trivial has too important a part to play in any biography to be lightly set aside, for often it is the link between the extra-ordinary, biography-compelling characteristics of the subjects and the ordinary humanity of the reader.

The historian, however versed in the artistic and political life of the Italian Renaissance, would surely feel some sort of quickening when he learnt what a vast quantity of confectionery was consumed by people of that period. Touched and speculative, he would picture Lorenzo de Medici drafting diplomatic letters to Louis XI with the peppermints close at hand, or Alexander VI soothing some feverish moment with *marrons glacés* ; and then, perhaps, in a flash of realisation almost as poignant as if he were himself in the same plight, he would bethink himself that they had no tobacco. It might even happen that fired by this he would make further researches, and embody them in a pamphlet called 'Confectionery and the Florentine Republic.' . . . And then his friends would say that it was ingenious but quite unsound.

A similar weakness for the small things of a great epoch has led to the writing of this article. For though so promisingly headed

"An Aspect of Tudor Counterpoint," it will make no attempt to deal with the front aspect, or a picturesque one, or even anything as comprehensive as a west elevation of the south porch. Due to a great admiration of Tudor polyphonic writing, it is based upon examples of that writing which contain in themselves very little that is admirable except industry and a certain level of dexterity; which make small claims to be considered as music, and none at all to musical performance; which are, in fact, nothing more or less than essays at technical facility, counterpoint exercises in all essentials save their eligibility to be proffered to an examiner in counterpoint.

Most people who have worked from manuscript part-books of the XVI Century will have noticed, tucked in among motets and madrigals and instrumental fancies and *In Nomines*, certain curious items—nameless, commonly wordless, usually in two or three parts, and containing a great many notes which run up and down with what seems somewhat aimless animation; containing also passages in black notation, and retorted time-signatures, and occasional directions in the body of the music such as "semibreve time is your ground," or *sesquiquarta*, or *tripla*; and looking, upon the whole, rather too difficult and decidedly too dull to waste any time over the scoring of, with real music waiting unscored on the other side of the leaf.

The difficulty is practically reducible to the strain of pinning down one crotchet in a succession of closely written quavers, or of supplementing the copyist, who, getting a trifle confused himself, has given it a tail by accident. As for the dullness, with the real music overleaf, it might be harder to explain away; but taken out of the scales for which they were never meant, and judged on their merits as studies in technique, these pieces provide a good deal that is entertaining, and suggest somewhat that is significant.

Counterpoint exercises of the present day are not likely to supply the future student of our more immediately future composers with anything relevant to his subject. For counterpoint is no longer a basis of composition: like Latin Prose, it is preserved because of the valuable training it gives in such moral qualities as fortitude and self-reliance. But the first conviction that emerges after a little study of these XVI century exemplars is that of their relevancy to the music they subserve. Relevancy, not likeness. Restless, disjointed, stuffed with ingenuities, bedizened with artifices, conscientiously and unremittingly clever, they offer a curious contrast to a style of writing which was above all things confident, untrammelled, and indifferent to its own skill. Nevertheless, they are based upon the same idea, that of the rhythmical independence of

the part; and the voice is the same, though it is repeating the multiplication tables, and not the *Dirge in the Duchess of Malfi*.

In this connection it is important to point out that there is strong reason for supposing that these pieces, unsingable as they seem, were sung, or rather, vocalized. (I said above that they had no claims to musical performance: but a moment's consideration of the stock piano recital repertory will show that this could be no real bar to their performance as music. In fact, I am inclined to recommend some band of skilled part-singers to learn them by heart and to put them at the end of their next programme.) Originally, however, they seem to have been used for practice, rather than performance, thus remaining true to their function of technical exercises. A number of those preserved in the Baldwin\* manuscript bear indications of this. One, by Dr. Tye, is headed in all the parts, "Sit Fast"—a title or direction not without its sardonic force. Another has the legend: "I am true. Try me. But sing true or shame me." John Baldwin was a singing-man of Windsor, and it seems highly probable that he included these challenging items in his collection, and added more of his own composition, in order to test, and perhaps display, his command of the gentlemanly accomplishment of bearing a part at sight. Indeed, it is a tenable suggestion that the examples in this genre still existing owe their preservation to the singer of the time, who, finding that they offered him in the compass of two pages practical instances of all the rhythmical difficulties he was likely to encounter in a lifetime, saw their value as material for practice, and copied them out. It might be contended that the weight of evidence is in favour of these pieces having been intended to strengthen the singer's technique rather than the composer's: some, no doubt, may have been so intended: but the internal evidence is against this, since the difficulties they exemplify are markedly rhythmical and structural, whereas, if they had been designed as solfeggi, they would almost certainly have contained passages of pure vocal technique, such as the shake on the repeated note; and no such passages occur in any of the specimens I have examined.†

The rhythmical system from which these difficulties were drawn

\* In the British Museum, from the Royal Library. The MS. dates from the early years of the last decade of the XVI Century.

† It may be worth while recalling Morley's mention of the virtuous contention upon the plainsong of *Miserere* between Mr. Byrd and Mr. Alphonso. XVI Century composers often practised their technique in such ways. Some people suppose that they were enabled to write their magnificent polyphony through knowing only a polyphonic style. It helped, no doubt; but when people talk English because it is the only language they know, they do not necessarily talk it well for that reason.



was an exceedingly rich and well-considered one. It comprised, first, those devices such as syncopation, cross-accent, and the mixture of feet—paeonic measures of  $3 + 2$  or  $2 + 3$  were much used—which are expressed in the relation of the single part to the basic pulse of the whole. By means of these the rhythmical texture is varied by constructing the run of single parts in such a way that they elude the regular accent. But the rhythmical material (what we call the number of beats to the bar) is uniform. For instance, if the measure is one of Perfect Time with the Lesser Prolation, each part has the same number of minims (two) to the three semibreves of the measure; but the accent can be placed so as to arrange these six minims as  $2 + 2 + 2$ , or as  $3 + 3$ , or as  $3 + 2$  with a minim left over to begin another group of 3 or 2 with an overlap into the next measure. Devices of this kind are current in modern music, and only differ from their XVI century ancestors by a certain self-consciousness and lack of spontaneity. The reason for this is worth insisting upon. Nowadays the time-signature means a periodic relation of accents, and to change  $2 + 2 + 2$  into  $3 + 3$  is definitely a rhythmical interruption, whereas in the XVI century, with time-signatures bearing no more than an arithmetical significance, this would be felt as merely a substitution of one rhythm for another.

Besides all this, another quite distinct group of rhythmical devices was developed out of the relation of one part to another. This, the system of Proportions, once codified with an Aristoxenian thoroughness, has dwindled away to the triplet and an etiolated quintuplet or so,\* and needs a few words of explanation before the part it plays in the following examples can be appreciated. These words shall be as few and as plain as I can make them, and readers who know their System of Proportions already are advertised that this is not meant for them.

Proportions were of two kinds: A, of Multiplicity; B, of Inequality. They dealt with the arithmetical or proportional relation of one part to another. The proportions of Multiplicity expressed the number of lesser value notes that could be sung against one whole note of greater value in another part. The series ran from *dupla* (2—1) to *decupla* (10—1). Each group of lesser notes was a complete structural unit, a theoretical dissolution of the whole note into so many equal component parts. The whole note, which was in XVI century practice a semibreve, I shall call the rhythmic unit.

\* In theory and in notation. In practice the composer writing filigree passages and the sensitive executant playing them still have something to do with the Proportions of Inequality. Cf. Chopin's saying about *tempo rubato*.



The Proportion of Inequality\* expressed the relation between a group of two or more of these rhythmic units and an unequal group of falsified rhythmic units, lesser in time-duration and more in number, set against them in another part. Both groups occupy the same amount of time, and, as in the Proportions of Multiplicity, represent a complete structural unit. But in the Proportions of Inequality the structural unit is a plurality of rhythmic units. The first and commonest Proportion of Inequality was *sesquialtra*, 3—2. Each of the two semibreves is a rhythmic unit; each of the three semibreves set against them is a falsified rhythmic unit. The combination of the two unequal groups is one structural unit. This analysis of the simplest of the Proportions of Inequality holds good for all the others.

The proportions only expressed the grouping of values. In actual practice the values could be compounded or dissolved as much as you pleased, provided their group-value was maintained: for instance, *tripla* (3-1) could be  $\textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o}$  against  $\textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o}$ , *sesquiertia* (4-3)  $\textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o}$  against  $\textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o} \textcircled{\scriptsize o}$ . The intelligent reader will have remarked that by dividing the rhythmic unit of a *tripla*, something tantamount to *sesquialtra* has been obtained. And by a kindred procedure *quintupla* (5—1) say, could be converted into *duple sesquialtra* (5—2); or by a further dissolution of the rhythmic unit into three or four equal parts, into *super-bipartiens tertias* (3—5) or

\* For the purpose of naming the Proportions of Inequality they expressed the ratios as "mixed" instead of "improper" fractions: thus,  $\frac{3}{2}$ ,  $\frac{4}{3}$ ,  $\frac{5}{4}$ , etc., became  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , etc.

For the integers of these mixed fractions they borrowed the names that were in use for the Proportions of Multiplicity (presumably because it was not worth while to burden the memory with two sets of names merely for the sake of grammar). Thus, *dupla*, which had meant the ratio 2—1, now merely meant the number two. When no integer was expressed, it was understood to be unity.

The fractional part they named in two ways.

Aliquot parts (fractions with unity for the numerator).with *sesqui*, thus,—

(1 +)	sesquialtra	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
(1 +)	sesquiteria	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
(1 +)	sesquinona	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
2	duple sesquialtra	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3	triplo sesquiteria	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

When the numerator was greater than unity, they wrote the ratio thus,—

(1 +)  $\frac{1}{4}$  *super-tripartiens*  
*quartas*  
 = (one and)  $\frac{\text{three parts over}}{\text{four}}$  . . . . . =  $\frac{5}{4}$

2 +  $\frac{1}{3}$  *dupla super-bipartiens*  
*tercias*  
 = two and  $\frac{\text{two parts over}}{\text{three}}$  . . . . . =  $\frac{8}{3}$

In this italianate Latin *partiens* (or, *partienza*) means 'nth part,' and the termination *as* means 'denominator.' The *sesqui-*s form a special class, because that particular form of fraction ( $\frac{n+1}{n}$ ) has played a great part in music, both in the matters of rhythm and of interval.—[A. H. F. S.]

into *sesquiquarta* (5—4). But, No! says the consistent theorist. Divide your rhythmic unit under a *tripla* if you will, it is not any the less one rhythmic unit. Proportions of Multiplicity, such as *tripla*, are based upon one rhythmic unit; Proportions of Inequality, such as *sesquialtra*, upon a plurality of rhythmic units. No tampering with a single rhythmic unit can destroy its integrity. The consistent theorist has theory and consistency on his side; and the intelligent reader has psychological probability on his; and he has my backing. Of the two Proportions that of Multiplicity is intrinsically the more primitive. Musicians would tire of setting five or seven or nine short notes against one long one; for one thing it would be dull; for another, if any sort of melodic development apart from a meandering up and down the scale or the arpeggio were attempted, it would be unsatisfactory. Reasons such as these may well have led to the breaking up of the rhythmic unit; and if the Proportions of Inequality were considered as having been thus evolved from the earlier Proportions of Multiplicity, many ambiguities involved in the usual method of treating the two kinds of Proportions as distinct and self-supporting could be done away with, and the whole question put upon a more sensible basis.

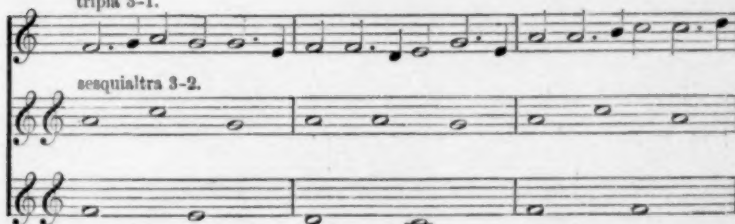
"What is Proportion?" asks *Philomathes* in the Plain and Easy Introduction: and is told by his master that it is "the comparing of notes placed perpendicularly one over another." Then he: "This I knew before: but what is that to Music?" His question might be echoed by some present-day doubter who can see in *sesquitertia* and the rest nothing but so many fetters from which Music, growing older and wiser, has had the sense to free herself. To such a one I would say—first, that to contrive a group of seven notes that will fit convincingly into a group of three demands a finer sense of melodic writing than can justly be dismissed as a mere compliance with fetters; and second, that if his rhythmic intelligence be sufficiently developed to enable him to enjoy a triplet, there seems no reason why it should not, after a little further training, be able to appreciate more extended inequalities. Then (lest he be angry) I should tell him that the more recondite and far-fetched of the proportions were kept, as strict canons are now, for the use of the learner and the learned man.

So much for the theory of Proportions. Their nature in practice can best be judged from the following examples.\* The first shows the combined use of *tripla* and *sesquialtra*. It is taken from a

\* All from the Baldwin MS. and here printed by kind permission of Sir Walter Parratt, M.V.O., Master of the King's Music.

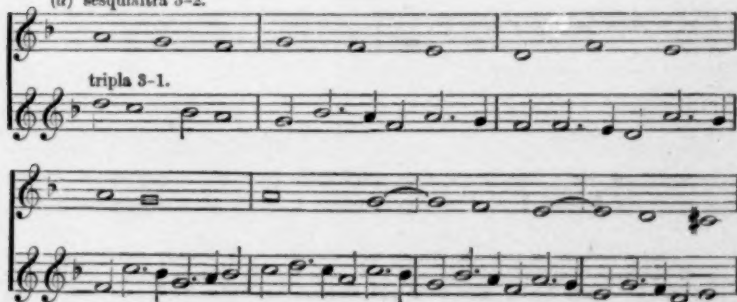
Study in Proportions by John Baldwin which is based upon a plain-song in equal semibreves which is repeated five times over as a ground, while the other two voices flourish about it. They flourish rather artificially, as will be seen from the extract. The whole thing seems to be the work of a diligent, rather than an able musician; but Baldwin must have been pleased with it since he carefully puts a date at the end: 24 December, 1591.

Ex. 1.  
tripla 3-1.



In Example 1 the plainsong in equal semibreves supplies the upper parts with rhythmic units. In the next example, from a duo by Mr. Gyles, Bachelor of Music, the rhythmic unit is only there in spirit. At first sight it looks as if the semibreves in the upper voice were the normal three semibreves of a measure of Perfect Time with the Lesser Prolation. But they are nothing so respectable. They are a conspiracy between two semibreves to smuggle a third one into a measure only licensed to carry two: and the *tripla* in the lower voice knows this, since it is doing three to one of each of the real rhythmic units.

Ex. 2.  
(a) sesquialtra 3-2.



Examples 1 and 2 both show a combination of *tripla* and *sesquialtra*; example 2 shows it very much better done, and a comparison of them in respect of rhythmic and melodic outline, is interesting. It must be realised that the use of Proportions did not in anyway debar the writer from employing those devices of rhythmical substitution and eluded (or cross) accent which I spoke of earlier. Mr. Fox Strangways has farsed this example, as florid plainsong kyries were farsed; and if the reader will fit the notes in example 2*b* into the accentuation of the words as shown by the barring, and at the same time keep an eye on the non-apparent rhythmic unit he will see what a sprightly thing can be made of a counterpoint exercise.

Ex. 2*b*.

What have you done with the hol - ly

If that is all you want me to do for you, car - ry it

stick I lent you?

off, and be hanged to you! I on - ly want to be

Let me have it back.

rid of your trou - ble - some, cum - ber - some, hef - ty old club!

The next two examples are from an anonymous piece. In example 3 the top part has *sextupla* (6—2)\* suggestive in its mixture of  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$  of the rhythmical outline of a Bach courante.

\* This direction in the text shows how careless XVI century notationers were about theoretical considerations, and how sensitive to artistic ones. Sextupla is properly 6—1, not 6—2. But 6—2 was wanted, not twice 3—1, as it might also have been noted, because 6—2 allows for the rhythmical substitutions.

The two inner parts have *sesquialtra* displaced from the accent by a rest in the lower of the two. The bass is the foundation of rhythmic units.

Ex. 3.

Ex. 3. musical score showing four staves. The top staff is labeled "sextupla 6-2." and the two inner staves are labeled "sesquialtra 3-2." The bottom staff is unlabeled. The notation is in G-clef and F-clef, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

Ex. 4. musical score showing four staves. The notation is in G-clef and F-clef, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score shows a break in the tempo/rhythm indicated by a double bar line and a repeat sign.

The same foundation of rhythmic units underlies example 4. At \* there is a break into *sesquitertia* (4—3) in the alto and a corresponding break into *dupla-super-bipartiens tertias* (8—3) in the tenor. This groups the rhythmic units into threes, and the top part bears this out by carefully changing its direction from *tripla* (3—1) to *sub-tripla* (9—3). So in scoring it I have indicated this by the bar-lines.



Examples 1 and 2 both show a combination of *tripla* and *sesquialtra*; example 2 shows it very much better done, and a comparison of them in respect of rhythmic and melodic outline, is interesting. It must be realised that the use of Proportions did not in anyway debar the writer from employing those devices of rhythmical substitution and eluded (or cross) accent which I spoke of earlier. Mr. Fox Strangways has farsed this example, as florid plainsong kyries were farsed; and if the reader will fit the notes in example 2b into the accentuation of the words as shown by the barring, and at the same time keep an eye on the non-apparent rhythmic unit he will see what a sprightly thing can be made of a counterpoint exercise.

Ex. 2b.

What have you done with the hol - ly  
If that is all you want me to do for you, car - ry it  
stick I lent you?  
off, and be hanged to you! I on - ly want to be  
Let me have it back.  
rid of your trou - ble - some, cum - ber - some, hef - ty old club!

The next two examples are from an anonymous piece. In example 3 the top part has *sextupla* (6—2)\* suggestive in its mixture of  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$  of the rhythmical outline of a Bach courante.

\* This direction in the text shows how careless XVI century notationers were about theoretical considerations, and how sensitive to artistic ones. Sextupla is properly 6—1, not 6—2. But 6—2 was wanted, not twice 3—1, as it might also have been noted, because 6—2 allows for the rhythmical substitutions.

The two inner parts have *sesquialtra* displaced from the accent by a rest in the lower of the two. The bass is the foundation of rhythmic units.

Ex. 3.

sextupla 6-2.

sesquialtra 3-2.

sesquialtra 3-2.

The same foundation of rhythmic units underlies example 4. At \* there is a break into *sesquitertia* (4—3) in the alto and a corresponding break into *dupla-super-bipartiens tertias* (8—3) in the tenor. This groups the rhythmic units into threes, and the top part bears this out by carefully changing its direction from *tripla* (3—1) to *sub-tripla* (9—3). So in scoring it I have indicated this by the bar-lines.

Ex. 4.  
tripla 3-1.

\* sub-tripla 9-3.

sesquitertia 4-3.

dupla-super-bipartiens tertias 8-3.

The musical notation for Example 4 consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes with a 'tripla 3-1' proportion indicated above it. The second staff is also in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes with a '\* sub-tripla 9-3.' proportion indicated above it. The third staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes with a 'sesquitertia 4-3.' proportion indicated above it. The fourth staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes with a 'dupla-super-bipartiens tertias 8-3.' proportion indicated above it.

The musical notation for Example 5 consists of four staves. The first staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes. The second staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes. The third staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes. The fourth staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes.

These two examples are of very high calibre, despite the octaves. But the number of parts and the presence of the rhythmic unit tends to make them a little formal in construction. The two-part inventions in this genre are much more entertaining, since both parts are exceedingly free, and frolic through all manner of Proportions with only occasional reference to the rhythmic unit that is but morally there to chaperone them. They are also more problematic and amusing to score, since they are often (for a joke: rather a learned joke, like quotations from Horace) written out in note-values that are only apparent, being in reality governed by the Proportions involved. To explain this properly would need an excursus into XVI century notation, and as I have already had to turn aside and dally with the theory of Proportions, I shall at all costs avoid this. But two short instances should make my meaning fairly clear. In example 5 the six notes from *a* stand in the text as six semibreves. But the direction above them, *sextupla* (6—1) i.e. six to one rhythmic unit and that a semibreve,

reduces them by three-quarters of their value. In the same way the direction *sesquialtra* (3—2) at *a* in example 2, reduces a three breve ligature to one-half of its value. Example 5, from Mr. Gyles' *duo* begins with *dupla sesquitertia* (7—3) in the treble against *quadrupla sesquialtra* (9—2) in the tenor. 7—3 is then taken over by the tenor while the treble reinforces it with 14—3. (Cf. alto and tenor in example 4.) They both quit this septuple proportion at (*a*) the treble going to *sextupla* (6—1) and the tenor into *trippla* and then into *sextupla* at the moment when the treble, after one *trippla*, augments its *trippla* into *sesquialtra*, afterwards augmenting its *sesquialtra* into *sesquitertia* (3—4). Then the tenor abandons *sextupla* and does a little plain *dupla* for a change, and as a sop to the rhythmic unit. The effect of the triple groups in the treble broadening out in geometrical progression is a striking one.

Ex. 5.  
*dupla sesquitertia* 7-3.

The musical notation for Example 5 consists of four systems, each with a treble and a tenor staff. The first system is labeled "dupla sesquitertia 7-3." and shows a treble staff with a 7-measure phrase and a tenor staff with a 3-measure phrase. The second system is labeled "quadrupla super bipartiens tertias. 14-3." and "(a) sextupla 6-1. tripla 3-1." and shows a treble staff with a 14-measure phrase and a tenor staff with a 3-measure phrase. The third system is labeled "sesquialtra 3-2." and "sub-sesquitertia 3-4." and shows a treble staff with a 3-measure phrase and a tenor staff with a 4-measure phrase. The fourth system is labeled "sextupla 6-1." and "dupla." and shows a treble staff with a 6-measure phrase and a tenor staff with a 2-measure phrase.

Example 5 contains some material that is refractory to modern notation. But example 6 (*ibid.*) is far more intolerant of such restraint—protests, in fact, against the fetters of present use quite as vigorously as the present-day doubter protested against those of the past. Both parts have *sesquitertia* (4—3), displaced in the tenor as in example three. The three rhythmic units referred to by the *sesquitertia* are not there, and, as in example 2, it looks at first sight as if the four semibreves of the upper part governed the measure. But it must be rigidly kept in mind that they do not. Over the displaced *sesquitertia* of the tenor the treble introduces first, *quadrupla* (4—1)—breaking the *quadrupla* by its use of dotted notes into a sort of *tripla*, and thus jeopardizing my statement (theoretical, remember) that each group of lesser value notes in the Proportions of Multiplicity was a complete structural unit—then, what the direction pompously calls *dupla-super-bipartiens tertias* (24—3); finally the whole thing ends in a blaze of *octupla* and glory, which begins at \*, where the duple measures of the opening of the *duo* are reinstated and the rhythmic unit appeased.

Ex. 6.

sesquitertia 4-3.                      quadrupla 4-1.

dupla-super-bipartiens tertias 24-3.

\* octupla 8-1.

\* octupla 8-1.

This should be enough to give some idea of the spirited nature of these Tudor studies in counterpoint. It is hard to refrain from pointing out some differences between them and counterpoint



exercises of to-day. First, they are rhythmical through and through. Second, they are extremely agile, and to that end are composed of few parts. Third, they show as much ingenuity in nearly breaking the rules as is nowadays shown in nearly keeping them. (The dodged fifths in example 6 were an accepted license: Byrd does the same thing at the end of "Lift up your heads" with magnificent effect: but a far more ingenious way of sailing near the wind is the displaced *sesquitertia* in the same example.) Fourth, they do not use passing notes to fill up gaps with. Fifth, the separate parts move with freedom, intent on horizontal development, rather than on vertical suitability, and sixth, this is made feasible by the fact that they move much faster.

I do not contend that they were invariably better as a gymnastic because of these qualities. Example 1 was purposely chosen to show how bald and bad they could be; and I daresay they may have encouraged that tendency to sprawl which it is one of the functions of counterpoint to correct. But I do not think it can be denied that they are far livelier and more likely to quicken the invention of those who did them than the bland, blameless affairs of the present day. Not that I would rail at counterpoint for being the thing it now is. As well rail at the prehistoric monsters in the Natural History Museum for not being as lively and stimulating as they were in the days of their young strength. Both alike have been subjected to the inscrutable and unappeasable workings of evolution, and with admirable irony evolution has conducted them both alike to South Kensington.

Even at the time when John Baldwin was writing out the studies from which I have quoted in his book, evolution had laid an autumnal hand upon them. In the third part of Morley's *Plain and Easy Introduction* (1597) we stand, if not already at the turn in the road, yet at a place where that turn has come into sight. A change in the texture of the book which occurs at this point might—without undue straining—be taken as an indication that Morley himself was conscious of this. The *Plain and Easy* is written in dialogue form. For the first two parts, which treat, respectively, of Learning to Sing, and of Descant, only two characters are considered necessary by the author: the Master to expound, the docile *Philomathes* to receive. But in the third part, which treats of the Composing and Setting of Songs, Brother *Polymathes*—who flitted across the first page on his way to hear some mathematical lectures—is brought in to take his part in the conversation; and the part is in large measure the ungrateful one of scapegoat.

*Polymathes* has previously studied music under one Master *Bouldie*. The method of Master *Bouldie* sounds to modern ears a

singularly pleasing one. "He continually carried a plain-song book in his pocket," says *Polymathes*; "and so walking in the fields, he would sing the plain-song, and cause me to sing the descant, and when I sung not to his contentment he would show me wherein I had erred." Despite the idyllic scene thus evoked, Morley, in the person of the Master, proceeds to disparage and poke fun at Master *Bouldie*, who, after his first appearance as a mixture of wise old Chiron and good Mr. Barlow, is revealed as nothing more admirable than a crabbed pedant, rejoicing in nothing so much as in clockwork ingenuities of hard Proportions and driving through of points. *Polymathes'* attempts at original descant in the Bouldean manner are sourly criticised, and the examples culled from other composers which he produces as the models recommended for his study are curtly dismissed as "stark naught."

Attempts and examples are given in the text of the Plain and Easy. Two of the examples are from Piggot and Risby, composers of an earlier date; the others are anonymous and may have been concocted by Morley. By Morley certainly are the attempts, the second of which is of such fretful fatuity that one wishes Wagner had borrowed it for Beckmesser. But it is a skilful parody of the proportional writing I have shown in my extracts, and the whole of this part of the Plain and Easy is clearly directed against the influence of that style of technical study which I have described.

This is significant. Morley would not have spent so much powder and shot as he does, if he were not attacking something fairly prevalent and well-established. Or, if it were spent retrospectively, as he rather implies, the ghost must have been a sturdy one to need so much exorcising. *Polymathes* is soon converted, and accepts meekly enough the advice he receives—"to seek to please the ear as much as to show cunning." Put like that it sounds convincing. But the seeds of decadence seem to me to lie concealed in that very counsel. It is one thing to please the ear; quite another when that phrase comes to connote, as it infallibly does, to soothe the ear. Ears that have grown used to being pleased grow lazy, and grow captious. The smallest departure from what they are accustomed to hear is apt to inflame them; and little by little the stock of what they can endure turns to flattery and to platitude. Finally to please the ear a kind of cunning skilled to seek the obvious and non-committal must be shown, a cunning very inferior to the vigorous and enterprising cunning of those who found out musical inventions, and which Morley seems so ready to dismiss.

Too ready: though writing when and as he did, almost inevitably so. For the old school of Proportion and Descant, cranky at times and slovenly at others as it may have been, was the school which

brought up the greatest composers this country has known. Morley's own master "never to be named without reverence," William Byrd, must have been grounded in this fashion, and Tallis and Whyte and Tavener—the whole glorious company of them. It is pleasant to think that they may have walked in fields singing descants upon a plain-song. Sing them they certainly did, wherever they sang. For it is an essential feature of this tradition that it was concerned with the singing of part against part, and not with the setting of note against note. It was this continual practical acquaintance with the capacities of the voice, and the continual experimenting with its possibilities, that gave to XVI century composers their command over a material at once so flexible and so austere, and if the method be judged by its fruits, it must be pronounced a good one.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER.

## CHORAL SINGING IN THE ARMY

THE subject of vocal concerted music in the Army is one which I approach with much the same feelings as those of the Israelites when a toll of bricks was demanded of them by the Egyptians. It is only that I have some faint hope "... out of senseless Nothing to provoke a conscious Something ..." that I am emboldened to venture on it.

The problem of making an unwilling horse drink when you've got him to the water is simple compared with that of inducing the Man in the Ranks to sing to order. When he does sing, it is as a rule the ephemeral trash of the music halls or the latest sentimental ballad, from which, after a short six months at most, he turns with loathing, and it is no more heard. Where now is "Tipperary"?—it is indeed "a long way" back to it: where are "The Home Fires"?—long since burnt out: where, in fine, are the songs of yester year? There is no voice nor sign nor any that answers. All alike are plunged in the gloom of a fortunate oblivion.

As to the singing of traditional patriotic ballads, I have never yet heard one at any of the many regimental "gaffs" I have attended; and the same might be said of the blood-and-thunder songs—words and music both beneath contempt—that were turned out in such large numbers at the time of the South African war. The men will *not* sing them, and nothing can ever induce them to do so. It is not that soldiers in general dislike singing: on the contrary, there is nothing that they like better than when on a route march the band plays the reigning musical comedy air, before it has become what they would call "part worn"; and under cover of the instruments they are emboldened to "throw their tongues" in chorus—unison, I needly hardly say. The life of such, however, is short, and once extinct, no power on earth will ever revive it and bring them once more into currency.

What, then, is the root cause of this unhealthy taste in music, and what its cure, if any? In this case it is easier to diagnose than to prescribe. To begin with, the musical atmosphere inhaled from his earliest breath by the average man—the Man in the Ranks—is that of the musical comedy distilled by the barrel organ, the gramophone, the cinematograph orchestra and the music hall. From the start of his conscious musical life, he has had no chance

of forming a taste for better things, and has come to demand the banal, unoriginal, easily apprehended tune, acquired, rivalled, supplanted, and forgotten within a few short months. He joins the Service, as a rule, with his musical horizon thus restricted, and it is small wonder that he utterly fails in appreciation of the efforts of a bandmaster who aspires to anything higher than the cheap stuff to which his ear has been accustomed. He is apt to look upon the band either as the one redeeming feature of a route march or the perquisite of the officers, and is satisfied that the greater part of the music made by it is of a nature not to be comprehended by him. In most units, the band plays a programme once or twice weekly in the barrack square, ostensibly for the men, but I hear from most of the bandmasters whom I have questioned on the subject that, unless they play musical comedy or rag-time airs, attendance and appreciation are alike thoroughly disheartening.

I fear that there is little to be hoped from missionary zeal on the part of the officers to improve musical taste amongst the rank and file. The average standard of musical culture in the commissioned ranks is remarkably similar to that of the men, only algebraically raised to a higher power. The saccharine drawing-room ballad or the lyrics of the latest revue, often represent for the officer music's highest achievement: he neither asks for nor will tolerate other manifestations,—unless perhaps some elderly overture or hackneyed "piece," recalling with a pleasant sense of emancipation the days when he and his governess found in his musical education a common source of suffering. Of course he abandoned the piano at the first possible moment, and, comprehensibly enough, has never—or seldom—regretted it. The little knowledge that he retains, however, may prompt him secretly to look upon himself as "musical," and he is therefore a more difficult subject to treat than the man, who is under no illusions regarding his acquirements or tastes.

There are, however, exceptions to the rule, and it is on them that depends in great measure the success of any scheme for the regeneration of musical taste in the ranks. The bandmaster by himself, excellent as his intentions may be and often are, without backing from the commissioned ranks is, in the majority of cases, little more than a voice crying in the wilderness. To such honourable and all-important exceptions, the officers who love music and recognize its unique value, cultural and recreative, I commend the suggestion set forth in this article, and beg that they will help and encourage their bandmasters to give it a fair trial before damning it out of hand.

The disease, then, of musical mal-nutrition, we may take to have



its origin in the early impressions acquired in childhood and continued up to the age when a man joins the Service; and the difficulty of a cure is accordingly evident. I do not believe that a degraded taste in music is necessarily the Briton's birthright, and I base this opinion on my experience as a member of a village choir near Portsmouth which, some eighteen years ago, used to compete at the Petersfield Musical Festival and for all I know may do so still. I found then that the better and more difficult of immediate apprehension was the music, the greater was its eventual popularity. Members of the Choral Society were, for example, to be heard humming or whistling Brahms' "Song of Destiny" as they dug in their cottage gardens; and I remember the excellent rendering it got from all the choirs at the Festival later. I remember also the eager and appreciative enthusiasm of the choirs taking part, and the unfailing discrimination shewn in the applause given to the performances of their rivals. It seemed to me then a cheering portent, and it encourages me to look back upon it now. Few had the most rudimentary ideas on the subject of reading music; few, even, had heard of the Tonic Sol Fa. Nevertheless, as I say, they eventually tackled with astonishing success the "Song of Destiny" and other by no means easy part songs, such as the old English "Lady, see on every side," and what is more, they loved doing them.

Here, then, I think we get a clue to what is wanted to improve musical taste and to quicken the powers of appreciation latent in most men. I believe that, if tactfully introduced, there are great possibilities for choral music in the Service. Solos are utterly useless, partly because soloists whose efforts are even tolerable are extremely rare and unlikely birds, and partly because it is quite impossible to induce soldiers to sing songs other than those to which they are used, calculated to obtain a cheap and easily earned meed of applause. The soldier soloist has, as a rule, but two types of song: the tragico-sentimental and the "popular" comic. No good is to be done with either of these, as any attempt to harmonize them would tend to condone and perpetuate the type, which is obviously undesirable. The sooner they are dropped and forgotten the better for the singer's progress towards musical discrimination. Their present popularity is, perhaps, the most formidable lion in the path of the reformer.

I think that a certain intellectual laziness, a reluctance to take the trouble necessary for appreciation of really good stuff, is to a large extent accountable for the popularity of all this unoriginal drivel. It is so easily acquired, and with so little effort, that few stop to consider that it has all (or something almost identical with

it) been said in the past over and over again. But let the men in general—such, at least, as have any pretensions to ear and voice—be given an even rudimentary introduction to the charm of part-singing and I believe the whole situation will change. The moment a man is able to sing a part in harmony he acquires thereby a pleasant sensation of musical superiority over his uninstructed comrade—a better conceit of himself musically than he had before. And of part singing it is—given a competent conductor—universally true that “love grows by what it feeds on”: the part-singer goes on from strength to strength and from enjoyment to greater enjoyment. To achieve this result, however, the conductor must be not only competent but keen and genuinely musical—capable of getting *en rapport* with his choir and infecting it with his own enthusiasm. Otherwise, its life will be anaemic, inglorious and short.

Hitherto, so far as I know, choral singing as a general practice flourishes only in Welsh regiments. I well remember during my voyage to South Africa in the *Kildonan Castle* in 1899, my own and the Welsh Regiment together, how the men of Wales sung glees at any moment when it occurred to them to do so,—sung them delightfully, too, and with a keen and evident enjoyment. My belief is, that with tactful and scientific inoculation, this power and the pleasure consequent on its possession could be induced in every regiment in the Service, and the reproach taken away from what Major-General Sir G. J. H. Evatt has rightly termed “Our Songless Army.” Part-songless we certainly are by comparison with the armies of other nations—those, at least, of which I have any personal knowledge, the Japanese and the Russian; though the former, as in all their national music, have only unison. They are to be heard singing their curious marching songs any day in the streets of Tokyo—strange, tuneless tunes, with altogether impossible intervals. I memorized one comparatively civilized, coherent one at a time when I was attached to a regiment of the Imperial Guards. After marching twenty-three miles out to their annual training camp, under a hot sun, heavily equipped, numbers of these sturdy, tireless little men after their evening meal formed themselves into a circle in two ranks with a “fugleman” in the centre. He sang the verse through and it was then taken up by the two ranks, marching to it round and round in opposite directions.

It was this :



and the enjoyment with which all sang it was evident: it seemed to act on their tired spirits and limbs like a tonic.\*

As to the Russians, it is well known that when two or three of them are gathered together, music—real music—is the result. Many a time in Siberia in 1919 have I heard an open truck-load of Russian soldiers singing their wild and enchanting folk-music in a most delicious harmony. I remember, too, visiting the Russian prisoners-of-war camp near Tokyo in 1905, and the wonderful unaccompanied singing that I heard in the hut that did duty as a chapel. It was no trained choir of specialists but the men themselves that were singing, numbers of them entering and leaving the hut every minute.

The future may hold something of the sort for our own army if only we get to work on the right lines. Hitherto, our men have had little chance, as few bandmasters have gone outside the orbit of their own bands to seek for music, or made any effort to cultivate it amongst the men generally. Their whole training has been practically confined to instrumental music, and they leave Kneller Hall with all their interest mortgaged to it up to the hilt. Is it to be expected that they can out of their inner consciousness evolve a scientific method for the teaching of choral singing in which their interest can only be secondary? At all events, the fact remains that they do not, and the result is as we see.

"Singing" has now been included amongst the optional subjects in the military educational syllabus, and this may prove an incentive to many for a serious study of it. It may well become an angel—even a moidore—unawares to those taking it up merely for the purposes of examination. It is, however, in the enterprise and unflagging enthusiasm of bandmasters, present and future, that the chief hope lies; but it will require all their energy, tact and knowledge to overcome the immovable conservatism coupled with the mingled self-consciousness and self-satisfied ignorance which they will find arrayed against them. Once the idea has taken root, once interest and emulation have been set on foot, the future of choral singing should be assured. In every unit are to be found men with some musical taste and knowledge who may have had previous experience in their village choirs. These should be the first to be sought out and trained, and may well prove to be in their companies grains of mustard seed, springing up into rival choral societies with an annual competition. The tournament of

\* This air must not be taken as at all typical of Japanese music. The "outer barbarian" has obviously had much to do with its inspiration, just as he has with that of the splendid national anthem, which has all the right Japanese *feeling* combined with the rhythm and coherence of western music.

song might eventually spread to the higher units—brigades, divisions and commands—and choral music become a recognized and honoured institution in the Service.

A beginning might be made with arrangements of well-known popular national airs, catches, rounds and madrigals by British composers from Purcell downwards, whose inherent excellence as tunes has kept them above the waters of oblivion. (The instant popularity of "The Beggar's Opera" gives an assurance of the capacity of the average man to enjoy a good tune when he hears one.) There are also a number of popular and comparatively easy glees which should not prove far out of a beginner's depth. Where (as in most cases) none exists, an arrangement of the words and music of the regimental quickstep might be made by each bandmaster, to be sung with the band at the end of every "gaff"; and men should also be encouraged to sing the national anthem in harmony. So much is now being done, under the direction of Mr. Arthur Somervell in the national schools, for the promotion of choral singing and the ability to read music in the rising generation, that there should by now be some repercussion in the Army, and most bandmasters should have under their hands the materials for a choir.

As the ability to read and sing a part grows, the glees chosen for performance might become increasingly ambitious, great care being exercised in the selection to ensure that the music shall be really of the best. There is plenty of such in our national song anthology,—tuneful, interesting, and delightful to sing, quite sufficient to supply the wants of any choir without their having to fall back upon anything second rate or unworthy. In addition to this, moreover, the enterprising bandmaster might arrange some of his part-songs with a humming, vocal accompaniment, which if well done is tremendously effective. I have heard Czecho-Slovak Soldiers in Vladivostok singing national airs arranged thus, and the result was astonishingly beautiful. I hope that eventually a demand may spring up, making it necessary to compile here at Kneller Hall, a list of part-songs recommended for performance, classified according to their technical difficulty, for the guidance of bandmasters. Most glees will, no doubt, require some rearrangement for first and second tenor, and first and second bass,—if, indeed, so many parts are considered necessary—but bandmasters should find no difficulty in carrying this out for themselves. I would also suggest that the native tunes of the territorial area whence the unit draws its recruits be, with their traditional words, revised and arranged as part songs. Such would be a musical stimulus to *esprit de corps*, and possess on that account a special

value. Collections of classified airs of this kind exist, arranged as solos, but as already pointed out, solos have no instructional value, even if the men could be persuaded to sing them, which it is certain that they could not.

I hope that before long we may have the services of a choral expert at Kneller Hall to lecture on vocal music generally and the training of a choir in particular, making use of the Chapel choir for demonstrations. If this hope materialises, students will leave to take up their duties as bandmasters well equipped to instruct in concerted vocal music, and with the interest and enthusiasm born of the knowledge which has hitherto been lacking. Over and above this, however, it is of great importance that every bandmaster should be capable of illustrating to his band how a passage should be treated, and the class of expression that should be given, by vocalizing it. Without a knowledge of voice production and a certain amount of actual training, his efforts in this respect are more likely to be productive of mirth than of demonstration to his men, in the majority of cases.

Singing, when all's said and done, is the most elemental, fundamental form of human musical expression, and is, to a greater or less degree, within the reach of anyone with ear and a voice, however small. All that is required to make it a constant source of interest and pleasure to the singer is a certain amount of voice cultivation—far less than that required to master the technique of an instrument. From instruction such as I have suggested there may well grow in time a quickened appreciation of what is good and what is great in music, instrumental and vocal, and a discerning discrimination against the poor, shoddy, unoriginal stuff which men have for so long been wont to applaud. I repeat: the future of vocal concerted music in the Service lies primarily on the laps of the bandmasters, and it is on their skilful nursing, training and encouragement, and the support of their officers, that its healthy maturity depends. We at Kneller Hall, for our part, will do what in us lies to ensure that our graduates leave here equipped with the technique necessary for these duties, and an appreciation of the great possibilities that lie in choral music. The cultivation of the dormant musical instincts of the Man in the Ranks will handsomely repay their efforts to stimulate it by the increased appreciation they will find of the music performed by their bands. The bandmaster should look upon himself as the Missioner of Music to the Service: a maker of converts; striving always towards something better—something beyond his immediate reach; stimulated rather than discouraged by failure; regarding with as much indifference as in these hard times he can muster the loaves and



fishes of "playing out," and above all, never pandering or playing down to the accepted taste of a popular audience. His musical self respect should be more to him than popularity or percentages.

JOHN C. SOMERVILLE,  
*Colonel.*

## THE COMPOSER AND THE MILITARY BAND

It has often been remarked, and often deplored, that composers of serious aims ignore the military band. The bandmaster who would raise the standard or extend the scope of his repertory can find little or nothing to help him so far as music written specifically for military band is concerned. Such original music as exists is of doubtful or commonplace character, neither demanding nor repaying, for the most part, careful and devoted practice. All the good music at his command consists of arrangements, the best of which are derived from orchestral sources, and the unsatisfactory effect of arrangements on development and discrimination needs no emphasis.

There are at least one hundred military bands of high average powers in this country. Of these a number, such as those of the Guards, are of superlative technical excellence. The best players in military bands are often identical with the best players in professional orchestras. The extent and frequency of military band performances are probably greater than those of any other form of concerted music. The military band has a virtual monopoly of open-air music, and the major part of its activity consists of civil engagements demanded and supported by an enormous public.

These facts cannot have escaped the notice of composers. It can never have been exceptionally difficult for a composer, whether well or little known, to secure at least a hearing for original work, and so far as the problem of publication is concerned the military band has a positive advantage over the orchestra by reason of its promise of more extensive circulation. The unfamiliarity of the medium can be no deterrent, for every type of military band instrument has been incorporated at various times in the orchestra, most of them are permanent members, and the exuberance of the young composer more usually takes the form of adding to their number rather than of neglecting them. It may perhaps be urged that wind instruments as a whole offer a less flexible means of expression than the strings which form the foundation of an orchestra. This is no doubt true, but only to a degree and under certain circumstances. In music for the open-air, of which we demand such a large quantity, wind instruments have an un-

challenged superiority in that they combine a high degree of expressiveness with unrivalled carrying power. Compared with a military band, the organ is inexpressive, but this has not deprived it of great classical traditions. Compared with strings, the piano is a tinkling mechanism, but that has not prevented it from taking high rank in the development of music. And there is a fair quantity of good chamber music for wind instruments. The boycott of the military band must have other causes than these.

Attention has been drawn to this question by the proposal which the Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music has made public, a proposal warmly supported by the British Music Society. Colonel Somerville invites the co-operation of composers in an endeavour to enlarge the field of good music for military bands, and he offers to employ for this purpose the very considerable resources of Kneller Hall in the rehearsal and performance of selected works. Anyone who has been present at a Kneller Hall Concert will know how admirable and extensive these resources are. A band of one hundred and fifty performers is normal, and its group of forty to fifty clarinets will give a fair idea of the scale on which it is built. The players are both keen and capable, and Kneller Hall has the further asset that its standards are naturally those which its students will in due time follow. In this respect, as in regard to the object which Colonel Somerville has in view, there can be no two opinions on the merits of the scheme. It commands unqualified approval. Mr. Holst has already written works which have been performed at Kneller Hall in the past, and it is to be hoped that other composers of standing will follow his example.

At the same time, if the facts already indicated are true, facilities for performance have never been absent, and apart from the immediate effect which the announcement of Colonel Somerville's proposals will no doubt have, it does not appear likely that the consistent apathy of composers will be very greatly affected unless the causes of it can be accurately diagnosed and remedied. And these causes do not arise either from the composer's lack of knowledge or lack of opportunity. In order to understand the composer's diffidence, the question must be approached from his own standpoint.

In the first place, he may well ask, what *is* a military band? This question is not a confession of ignorance, but the key to a very real difficulty. The 'military band' is extremely hard to define, except in very general terms. An ensemble of wind instruments describes it with fair accuracy, but a more precise analysis raises almost as many queries as it solves, and the seriousness of this reservation is immediately seen if we examine and compare

the term 'orchestra' as the composer understands it. The orchestra is very much more than an ensemble of various instruments. It has a definite and for the most part stable internal organisation, with values and relations both of quality and quantity that are permanently connoted and understood. These values and relations have been at the same time developed and fixed by the classic composers, and so far as fundamentals are concerned they are now universal. A brief indication of some of them will make the character of the military band clearer in its turn.

Whatever instruments an orchestra may or may not include, it has as a foundation a compact body of stringed instruments, homogeneous in quality, divided into at least four parts of equal value, and balanced so as to give a satisfactory ensemble. The total number of strings may vary, but their internal grouping and proportion is, within reasonable limits, taken as fixed. The orchestra consists in fact of what may be called a 'chorus' of strings plus a number of wind instruments, the latter being all 'solo' instruments to the extent that have as a rule separate parts. The functions of the strings are many, and a wide range of effects belongs to them intrinsically, but they also form the background against which all the other orchestral instruments stand. They offer the composer a permanent criterion of internal values. The strings are particularly well fitted for this purpose in that they have an exquisite range of nuance which never tires the listener and which is most remarkable in the direction of *pianissimo*, a compass covering the whole range of the orchestra and homogeneous throughout, and a perfect *legato*. Moreover, they can be played uninterruptedly for considerable periods without undue fatigue to the player, a very important qualification. This foundation of an organised chorus of strings was already stable when the classical orchestral forms were first evolved.

Projected on this background stand next a group of wood wind instruments, varied in quality, but consisting normally of four types arranged in pairs: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons. Their compass and pitch relationships are to some extent analogous to those of the quartet of strings. The ensemble of these instruments has always presented difficulties, owing to their individual peculiarities of intonation and technique. As against the strings, however, they can be massed with fair consistency, and orchestral experience has made players very sensitive to the modifications of tone that will assist blending. Their beauty and variety as solo instruments needs no comment.

Occupying a peculiar position between the wood wind and the third orchestral group of brass instruments stand the French horns,

two to four in number, and belonging either to the wood wind or to the brass instruments proper, according as their delicacy of tone or considerable reserve of power is taken as a standard. The brass instruments proper, two trumpets and three trombones, form a homogeneous group for five-part harmony. The Tuba, which is a later addition, belongs to a different lineage. It is the least unsatisfactory of several deep brass instruments that have been tried.

To these three groups is added a pair or more of kettle-drums which have definite pitch and can be tuned to various notes. To this extent the kettle-drums are musical instruments and not purely percussive like the bass and side drums.

The reader is asked to forgive this catalogue of elementary technical details which are no doubt familiar to him. The architecture of the orchestra was already broadly decided in the time of Haydn. Mozart and Beethoven crystallized it. The orchestras of Wagner and Strauss are of course much larger, but they follow the same plan, and the point which this discussion is intended to emphasize is that to the composer the very name 'orchestra' means all that has been described above and a great deal more. To him the orchestra is an ensemble that has definite and manageable internal values and a permanent general structure; its complications can be handled consistently and accurately; and all orchestras with any claim to completeness are in plan alike. The orchestra is not beyond criticism either on practical or ideal grounds, but it is at least an organism with intelligent and intelligible varieties of function and a logical organization, and this is what, in its present form and from the composer's point of view, the military band most unfortunately is not.

The band establishment of an infantry battalion provides for twenty-two performers. This number is frequently augmented, and some of the Guards bands, by combining the establishments of two or three battalions, number as many as sixty when playing at full strength. It must be presumed, however, that the smaller number was intended to furnish a reasonably complete ensemble, and of this there is ample evidence in the fact that bands of twenty to twenty-five performers constantly fulfil important public engagements. The latter number is taken as a fair average standard in the analysis given below.

Before proceeding further, however, it must be understood that no two bandmasters of equal experience and repute would necessarily agree as to the exact numbers and varieties of instruments most desirable in a band of fixed total size. And this is a very serious matter, because variations of type involve variations of balance. It follows also that if no two bands of the same size



necessarily agree in structure the whole problem of scoring music for military band is and must be fluid and uncertain. It may indeed safely be said that every composition played by a military band, whether original or not in the ordinary sense of the term, is to a more or less considerable extent an 'arrangement.' The importance of precise and carefully balanced scoring is in practice usually ignored by arranging the music in the first place for a kind of skeleton band which shall include all the indispensable notes. To this as many parts are added as may be required, and the arrangement is made suitable for almost any degree of variation by generous 'doubling.' Moreover, military band music is not published in full score. The bandmaster has to make the best of a 'conductor's' part, which is often skilfully reduced, but which cannot contain more than fragmentary indications of the scoring. Individual parts cannot be accurately followed in this score and the bandmaster must rely on those personal faculties which he generally possesses to a very high degree, his ear and acumen. Much more could be written in this connection, but it will now be sufficiently clear that the addition of numbers to the band does not guarantee any improvement in organization. A band of fifty is in this respect not necessarily superior in structure to a band of fifteen. At the same time a tribute of genuine admiration is due to the extraordinary skill and ingenuity with which the best arrangements are made, and equal or greater praise belongs to the players whose wind instruments are made to compete with the technique of a violin. It is also true that the best bandmasters make special arrangements for their own particular combinations. But this does not ease the general inconsistency, and the external composer may be pardoned if he views the situation with misgiving. He is already far from the sensitive standards of the orchestra.

To facilitate discussion and to assist the non-technical reader, the following list of the instruments which are usually present in a military band of twenty-five performers is arranged so as to show intrinsic differences of quality. Only those instruments placed on the same line are of the same tonal or technical nature.

#### INSTRUMENTATION OF A MILITARY BAND OF TWENTY-FIVE PERFORMERS.

One Flute (or Piccolo).

One Oboe ; one Bassoon.

One E flat Clarinet ; six B flat Clarinets.

(The B flat Clarinets are usually distributed in three parts, thus : four firsts, including soloists, one second, one third.)

One Saxophone (Alto).

One String Bass. (The orchestral Double-Bass.)

Two French Horns.

Three Cornets (playing two parts); one Euphonium; two Brass Bases.

(The term Brass Bass is used to cover several instruments of similar construction, of which the orchestral Tuba is one.)

Three Trombones.

One Side Drum; one Bass Drum. (Two performers, who also provide Cymbals, Triangle, Glockenspiel, and other 'effects'.)

Some bandmasters would prefer to have four Cornets and reduce the Clarinets by one. Some would substitute an Althorn or Baritone (related to the Cornet family) for the Saxophone. The French Horns might be Tenor Horns. Some would be content with two Trombones and would add an instrument elsewhere; and so forth. All would admit that the above instrumentation is reasonably typical, and probably better than a good many of the combinations they have to handle.

Many illuminating facts emerge from a study of the above list. Taking a four-part standard of balance and using the terms *soprano*, *alto*, *tenor* and *bass* to describe in a very general way the approximate pitch at which the various instruments are chiefly employed, there are, amongst the wood wind as a whole, *seven sopranos* (flute, oboe, and five clarinets); *one alto* (second clarinet); *one tenor* (the third clarinet); and *one bass* (bassoon). Add the saxophone and the two horns, and the totals are then, respectively, *seven*, *three*, *two* and *one*. In the brass section there are, including Trombones, *two sopranos* (cornets); *two altos* (cornet and trombone); *one tenor* (trombone); *four basses* (euphonium, trombone and two brass basses). The euphonium is an important solo instrument and does not necessarily double the basses, but its pitch is analogous to that of the violoncello. The string bass may be added impartially. The grand totals are; *nine sopranos*, *five altos*, *three tenors*, and *six basses*. The internal proportions of each of these parts are of course highly inconsistent in every respect, and their vertical symmetry is equally fortuitous.

It must be borne constantly in mind that a military band is in its origin and for official purposes a marching band, and the most effective features of a marching band are a clear tune, a strong bass, and plenty of drums. This is perfectly sound and legitimate in its place, and highly invigorating, as every soldier knows. But such rough and ready standards should be frankly superseded for concert purposes. Bandmasters are generally alive to this, and by judicious

attention produce admirable effects of equal and regulated sonority. But this is only true so far as the quantity of sound is concerned in mass, or its quality in particular instances. No management can make such a heterogeneous combination repay in musical value its detailed variety. The persistent use of pure percussion has great dangers too, for it can be manipulated by the unscrupulous to cover a multitude of defects. Its prominence even in the best military bands is a negation of the sound orchestral maxim that the value of such effects is inversely proportional to their frequency.

When the attempt is made to find internal values and relations in the normal military band which shall be analogous to those which are the foundations of orchestral thought, then the composer's difficulties become insuperable. In no department of the band can even four single parts of suitable and related pitch and of tonal and technical equality be guaranteed. Only in the cornet group do they normally exist at all. The wind as a whole has no bass. The brass may have far too much. And as for the provision of a permanent background such as has been noted in the orchestra, which shall be at the same time a criterion of tonal values and itself a homogeneous group with which the single or concerted values of other groups can be contrasted or combined, there is nothing in the military band even remotely organized to this end. The reader familiar with orchestral values may propound at his leisure as many additional technical conundrums as may occur to him. The ultimate fact is that the military band is as yet unorganized. It is in many respects two centuries behind the orchestra. And a variable ensemble of unrelated and unregulated instruments, however technically perfect as individuals, can have little attraction for the composer to whom consistent thought and accurate expression are alike indispensable.

Destructive criticism is easy; constructive reform is another and a much more arduous task. It may perhaps be legitimately hoped, however, that the development of the military band will follow lines similar to those which in the case of the orchestra have been sanctioned by the great composers and stood the test of time. Already the military band pays the orchestra the homage of borrowing its library. This being so, practical suggestions are not difficult to make. An initial ambiguity must be removed first. The military band has not yet made up its mind whether its fundamental values shall be derived from the wood wind instruments or from the brass. Its balance fluctuates from one to the other, and until this question is decided logical development is impossible. There can be no doubt as to which side musical opinion in general would lean. The most characteristic feature of the military band, that to which its

most musical and discriminating patrons are drawn, is the intrinsic beauty and flexibility of its wood wind instruments. The brass band proper has a place and values of its own. A brass band containing a few comparatively hidden wood wind instruments could never cease to be inherently amorphous.

Frankly accepting then the initial importance of the wood wind, and bearing in mind the various qualifications that have been noted as underlying the string basis of the orchestra, it is desired to provide the military band with a homogeneous body of wood wind instruments which shall give it a permanent foundation of at least four equal parts. Practically, there is only one answer to this. The flute has no family. There is an alto oboe, the *Cor Anglais*, which with two oboe parts and a bassoon would provide a balanced quartet. But the tone of the oboe is difficult to subdue and the instrument is very fatiguing to the player. This latter quality alone would disqualify it for the present purpose. There remains the clarinet. The saxophone has claims, though it is not strictly of the wood wind family, but players are few and are likely to remain so until the saxophone has captured a permanent place in the orchestra. In any case the saxophone has no striking advantage over the clarinet. Clarinets exist that will give a complete four-part family. They have all been blessed by the orchestra and their tone, technique and notation are practically identical. They have an extended compass, a *pianissimo* comparable only to that of the strings, a good legato, a wide range of expression, great technical facility, and they are comparatively easy to play. All this is elementary knowledge to every musician. Why then should not the military band accept as a permanent and indispensable basis a double quartet, say, consisting of three first clarinets, of which one might be in E flat, two second clarinets, two alto clarinets and two bass clarinets? Many bands have most of this already. What is required is its authoritative standardisation. This done, the rest is comparatively easy. The Pedal clarinet is not yet perfected, and for the present the string bass might be retained for concert purposes. Flute, oboe, French horn and bassoon should remain, primarily as soloists but valuable in combination too, and they should be paired when numbers allow. The brass section should contain a complete four-part equipment of related instruments at least. The number and variety of brass instruments is so confused and confusing that throughout this discussion it must be understood that by the cornet group is meant all brass instruments having cup-mouthpieces and valves. There should be of these, say, three cornets, playing two parts, one althorn, one euphonium and one brass bass. To these add three trombones, kettle-drums for concert

purposes, and one further player of percussion instruments makes a total of twenty-five.

A band restricted to the infantry establishment might omit the string bass, and perhaps the bassoon and one trombone; for marching purposes the kettle-drums would go in favour of more suitable percussion, and other adjustments could be made without destroying the essential character of the band. When large numbers are available the whole of the above could be doubled, or saxophones might add a new and admirable family. Orchestral trumpets certainly deserve attention. These are suggestions only. What is required is logical internal standardisation, and the proposals here outlined are put forward as being practically within reach. It would take time, naturally, to make unanimous changes, but if composers and bandmasters were to lend unremitting influence to the process, a great deal could be accomplished, and the co-operation of publishers would speedily follow. Composers at least would then have a means of expression of calculable dimensions, and so far as numbers might permit, of consistent and standard plan.

Others may find different and better solutions of the difficulties that have been discussed. It may be that the future of the military band will develop along quite other lines. If this is so it must be admitted that present indications are exceedingly vague. And there the problem must be left.

GEORGE DYSON.



## OLD CAROLS

OF carols—real, old and genuine—we have in truth a goodly heritage ; some of them, it is true, are preserved for us more by chance than anything else. Judging, however, by the carols usually written, published and performed to-day, the greater part of us can have no feeling beyond distant appreciation for these gems of the past. It is not entirely the fault of the people, who only sing what is set before them. It is the fault of those who failing to understand the place that carols should have in human life, have succeeded in reducing them to the level of second and third rate hymns, and in confining them practically to church use.

Why, for instance, do we tolerate such impositions as "Good King Wenceslas ?" The original was and is an Easter Hymn with the words *Tempus adest floridum* found in Peter of Nylandt's *Piæ Cantiones*, (of 1582), with its proper tune, and recently republished by Rev. G. Woodward for the English Plainsong Society.

It is marked in carol books now as "Traditional," a delightful word which often conceals ignorance. There is nothing traditional in it as a carol. In the fifties the Rev. Thos. Helmore, to whom plainsong revivalists owe much, who was the possessor of the only copy of *Piæ Cantiones*, borrowed the tune and set it to some lines by Dr. Neale. Result, a brand new traditional carol.

Another instance of musical wrong-doing is the adaptation, incidentally involving the mutilation of the rhythm, of that grand tune *In dulci jubilo* to the English words "Good Christian men rejoice." It is inconceivable that anyone of any real musical culture should have lent himself to this tinkering with a perfect tune for the sake of fitting it perforce to words of inferior merit, especially as there were in existence words in John Wedderburn's Book, published in or about 1567, which show that nearly 300 years previously the tune had been considered worthy, as it certainly is, of having words based on the original composed for it, with a view to its use in Scotland.

In France one too often finds a carol with directions that it is to be sung to the air of the last new gavotte or to a drinking-song ; and it is not unusual to find a carol which begins with the same

words as the profane tune to which the carol is directed to be sung. There are instances of this in English, but it is not common. There are, however, very beautiful French carols, and many in patois—simple carols and nothing more: "Chantons, je vous en prie" with its tune, said to date back to the times of the earlier crusades—"Entre le bœuf et l'âne gris"—will always be sung. The Abbé Natalis Cordat produced carols every year until his death in 1648. Further south Saboly, the eminent organist, and the Abbé Peyrot in the 17th century produced tunes and words of great charm. Saboly frequently marred the effect of his carols by introducing politics. Foreign carols, however, would involve an excursion over a field too wide for the present occasion.

Next year will be the four hundredth anniversary of the publication by Wynkyn de Worde of a booklet of which but a couple of pages have survived to our time. These pages contain a carol and a hunting song. This fragment is in the British Museum, Rawl. 4°, 598 (10), and has been reprinted in *Anglia*, XII, 587. The carol is an early version of the Boar's Head type—a variant of which is still sung at Queen's College, Oxford, on Christmas Day, with medieval ceremony. The words are here quoted from *Early English Lyrics* by Chambers and Sidgwick (A. H. Bullen, 1907).

*Caput apri defero  
Resonans laudes Domino.*

The Bore's hede in hondes I bringe,  
With garlondes gay and birdes singinge.  
I pray you all, help me to singe,  
*Qui estis in convivio.*

The bore's hede, I understonde,  
Is cheffe service in all this londe,  
Where so ever it may be fonde,  
*Servitur cum sinapio.*

The bore's hede, I dare well say.  
Anon after the twelfth day  
He taketh his leve, and goth away  
*Exivit tunc de patria.*

And there was another Boar's head Carol sung at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1607. The Carol of hunting is also given in Chambers and Sidgwick, and begins:—

As I came by a grene forest side,  
I met a forster that badde me abide,  
With "Hey go bet, hey go bet, hey go howe!"

Nine years later Wynkyn de Worde printed a book containing twenty songs, nine in four-part and eleven in three-part harmony. Of the music the bass part is all that is known to be extant. Chambers and Sidgwick, p. 156, give one carol,—

She may be called a sovereign lady,  
That is a maid and beareth a baby.

A maid peerless  
Hath borne God's son.  
Nature gave place,  
When ghostly grace  
Subdued reason.

As for beauty  
Of high gentry,  
She is the flower  
By God elect  
For this effect,  
Man to succour.

Of virgin's queen  
Lodestar of light,  
Whom to honour  
We ought endeavour  
Us day and night.

Two other songs quoted in full by Chambers and Sidgwick are a moral song with a Latin refrain, *Auxilium meum a Domino*, and a spring song which begins—

Pleasure it is  
To hear, iwis,  
The birdes sing.  
The deer in the dale  
The sheep in the vale  
The corn springing, etc.

This is signed "William Cornish."

Another early printed source of some of our Carols was a volume or series of volumes printed between 1546 and 1552 by Richard Kele. They were printed by Philip Bliss in a book of *Bibliographical Miscellanies* early in the 19th century—but the original volume has unfortunately been lost.

Those who may be interested in carols before this date of Wynkyn de Worde, 1521—1530, must refer to the two volumes of Early Bodleian Music published in 1901, the one containing fac-similes, the other the transcriptions into modern musical notation.

These musical compositions range in date from about 1180 to 1500 and are of incalculable value to the student. One of the best known is perhaps that which begins—

In Bethlehem that noble place,  
As by prophecy said it was,  
Of the Virgin Mary full of grace  
*Salvator mundi natus est.*

with refrain—

Be we merry in this feast,  
*In quo Salvator natus est.*

It is printed in Beechings' *Christmas Verse* (Methuen, 1895), and also in *Ancient English Christmas Carols*, by Edith Rickert (Chatto and Windus, 1910). The refrain was borrowed in a later carol of the 17th century of early music.

There is an early carol which was in the Douce Collection and was rather freely rendered into English by Douce from the original Norman or Anglo-Norman French. It begins—

Seignors, ore entendez à nus  
De loinz sumes venuz a vous  
Pur quere Noel :

From that time to the time of Wynkyn de Worde, leaving out those given in the two volumes of the Early Bodleian Music, mentioned above, it is difficult to quote any English carols with dates—and more so with both dates and music.

Trinity College, Cambridge, possesses a MS. (O. 3, 58) containing mainly carols,—the only secular hymn being a transcription of the Agincourt Song—of the 15th century, and written in what Mr. Chambers in his *Early English Lyrics*, pronounces to be a North of England dialect.

The MS., which is reproduced in the edition by J. S. Fuller-Maitland and W. S. Rockstro contains the music, but it will not, even when harmonized in the most scholarly way according to the rules of the time so far as they are known, and with added parts, appeal very strongly to most of us of to-day. It is unfortunate that it is so, for some of the carols are jewels, viz.—

There is no rose of such virtue  
As is the rose that bare Jesu,  
Alleluia.

and—

In Bethlehem, this berd\* of life  
Is born of Mary, maiden and wife  
He is both God and man I schrifet†  
Nowel, Nowel.  
This Prince of Peace shall heal all strife  
And dwell with us perpetual.

XVth century.

No - wel, No - wel, No - wel. To us is born our god e -

- ma - u - el in bed - lem this berde of

lyf is born of Ma - ry may - dyn and wyf He is bothe god and

man..... I schryf No - wel,.... No - wel Thys prince of pees xal

set - yn al stryf And wone with us per - pet - u - el.

This fine carol has so far escaped the transcribers. The music in this MS. is possibly by Dunstable. Another MS. in the same library (B. 14, 39) also contains carols but without music. Another interesting collection of carols, nearly a century later than the Trinity College MS., is to be found in the Balliol MS. 354. The MS. seems to have been the commonplace book of one Richard Hill, and from internal evidence may be dated between 1504 and 1536.

The most interesting portion is that containing the carols and this has been almost entirely reprinted by Professor Flügel in *Anglia*, vol. xxvi (1903) and subsequently in book form, subscribed for as a birthday greeting to him by some of his many friends.

As the MS. includes many carols of great beauty, not previously known, and in fairly complete form, it is of surpassing value. They give in many cases, the impression that they were written down

\* Child.

† Write.



from memory rather than copied. This would account for some of the eccentric spelling and for some of the curious Latin. Some of the carols are to be found in other surviving MSS., and it is from the collating of these that the conclusion was formed as to their having been written down from memory. The music of some of them will be found in Vol. II of the Early Bodleian music and many of them can be sung to some of our really genuine traditional carols.

It is difficult to select from about 130 specimens—perhaps the most beautiful is one (also in the Douce MS. 302) which by some is attributed to John Audlay of Haughmond, Shropshire, which begins (slightly modernized as given in "More Ancient Carols," Shakespeare Head Press Booklets, No. V, p. 17)—

The flower is fresh and fair the hewe,  
It fades never, but ever is newe;  
The blessed stock that it on grewe,  
It was Mary that bare Jesu.  
A flower of grace,  
Of all flowers it is solace!

The last verse but one—there are seven in all—is as follows—

Of lilly white, of rose of rise  
Of primrose and of flower-de-lyce,  
Of all flowers in my device  
The flower of Jesse bereth the price,  
For most of all  
To help our souls both grete and small.

The other fine one is "The Shepherd," with the refrain—

Can I not sing but hoy,  
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepard upon a hill he satt;  
He had on him his tabard and his hat,  
His tarbox, his pipe, and his flagat:  
His name was called Joly, Joly Wat,  
For he was a gud herdes boy  
Ut hoy!  
For in his pipe he made so much joy.

The fifth line seems to be introduced as spoken aside, for all the other verses have but six lines. The refrain "Ut hoy" is curious and suggests the "Et hoy!" or "Et hye," or again "Et ho!" in

Gaste's *Chansons Normand du XV siècle*. The refrain "With ay!" is found in another English hymn—

Goodes sonne is borne ;  
His moder is a maid  
Both after and beforne,  
As the prophecy said.  
With ay !

and in a 15th century variant of the Boar's Head song we find—

Hey, hey, hey, hey.  
The boar's head is armed gay.  
The boar's head in hand I bring  
With garland gay in portering.  
I pray you all with me to sing,  
With hey.

Another of the 15th century—

I saw a sweet and silly sight  
A blissful bride, a blossom bright  
That mourning made and mirth among.  
A maiden mother, meek and mild  
In cradle kept a knave child  
That softly slept ; she sat and sang  
" Lullay, lullow, lully, lullay, lully, lully, lully, lully,  
Lullow, lully, lullay, baw, baw  
My bairn, sleep softly now."

This is one of the earliest of the lullabies and is attributed to John Brackley, tutor of William Paston. The MS. in the British Museum contains several other carols and has the music in addition. Among them is an early version of *Puer natus in Bethlehem*.

In the 15th and 16th century MS. in the British Museum there are in Add. MSS. ff. 7b—58 many instances of carols arranged for two or three voice parts. Among them were "Nowell, who is there that singeth so Nowel," by Smert. This was printed in ultra-modern form by Edmond Sadding, in 1860, in his little book of carols. *O radix Jesse*, "Now make me joye," "Tydynges trew," also by Smert, and a carol *Nesciens mater virgo virum peperit*—the words of which from then onwards were so often set to music.

In Royal App. 58 there is "Ah, my dere son, said Mary," and chorus "This endris nyght."

This Endris night.

*Refrain.*

This en - dris night I saw a sight a star as bright as day; And

ever a - mong A mai - den sung Lul - lay, By, By, Lul - lay. My

swee - tē brid, Thus it is be - tid Though Thou be King ve - ray; But,

ne - ver - the - less I will not cease To sing By, By, Lul - lay.

All the carols in these two MSS. deserve very careful study.

Some of the most beautiful of the 15th and 16th century Carols are those of the lullaby kind. The refrains are most haunting from their simplicity and charm.

"Lullay, mine liking, my dear Son, my Sweeting,  
Lullay, my dear Heart, mine own dear Darling."

Another is—

By-by, lullaby, by, by, lullaby,  
Rocked I my child :  
By-by, by-by, by-by, lullaby,  
Rocked I my child.

Another—

Lullay, Jesu, lullay, lullay !  
Mine own dear mother, sing lullay.

Then we have the exquisite carol from the Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors, at Coventry, and known as the Coventry Carol. It is dated 1534 and the music has fortunately come down to us.

Lully, lulla, you little tiny Child  
By-by, lully, lullay.

But the most beautiful of all is the Lullaby Carol of the nuns of St. Mary's, Chester. It is of the 15th century and the tune is extant. It begins—

Qui creavit cœlum.

Qui cre - a - vit cœ - lum... Lul - ly, Lul - ly, Lu.....

na - sci - tur in sta - bu - lo, By, By, By, By, By.....

Rex qui re - git se - cu - lum, Lul - ly, Lul - ly, Lu.....

and so on, the refrain changing every other line and thus preventing any feeling of monotony.

Apart from the Anglo-Norman Carol there are not many authentic traces of other carols from across the Channel.

There is the British Museum Egerton MS. 2615, f. 1, the words and music of the celebrated *Prose de l'Ane*—of the 13th century with music for singing in unison, and on f. 43 of the same MS. music harmonized for singing in three parts. There is, however, no note of the performance of the *Prose* in this country. We in our ignorance of its origin sing the tune to the A. & M. words, "Soldiers who are Christ's below," and it is to be found in other hymn-books. It is a fine tune with a good swing to it and would sound well if taken up properly by a crowd as an accompaniment to the procession of a maiden riding an ass through the chief streets of Beauvais, or of Sens, to the cathedral.

Luther's great Christmas song *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ*, which appeared in a German tune-book not earlier than 1524, was translated by our own Miles Coverdale, in a very close and spirited rendering and is given in *Ancient English Christmas Carols*, by Edith Rickert. It must have come over here very soon for Luther died in 1546 and Coverdale in 1568.

In Puritan times carols as such died a natural death though sporadic attempts at revival were made in almanacs and other ephemeral literature.

It is a pity that the carol has been handed over body and soul to Church use. There was no need for it. The Church had its hymns, sequences and all it could wish for in *Veni, Redemptor gentium, Christe, Redemptor omnium, A Solis ortus Cardine*, the incomparable hymn by Prudentius *Corde natus ex parentis*, the large group of the type represented by *Puer natus in Bethlehem*, and *Parvulus nobis nascitur*, Mauburn's *Heu quid jaces stabulo*, Ben Jonson's grand hymn "I sing the Birth was born to-night"

and "Adeste fideles." There was no real necessity to appropriate the carol and spoil it by fitting it for church use.

Several years ago now the Rev. A. Chope at St. Augustine's, Queen's Gate, compiled a Carol Book which was to take the place of a hymn-book from Christmas to Ascensiontide. The drawback to the collection was that the carols were in most cases hymns, and poor at that, very thinly disguised. To appear in a carol book does not make a set of verses necessarily a carol. Many of the tunes were folk-song melodies, but that could not make carols of the verses. It is extremely difficult if not impossible to sit down and write a carol, and more difficult to write a carol tune. The time for that has gone by. No sane person would sit down nowadays to write a folk-song or compose a new folk-dance. If he did who would sing the one, or dance the other from choice?

In the *Cowley Carol Book* (by G. H. Woodward, Mowbray & Co.), which in itself is a wonderful collection, the prevailing tone is that of the hymn, and the tunes are the most important part of the book. The Helmore and Neale book (Novello, 1853), coming as it did at a time when church music was at a very low ebb, gave the hymnal note, and it was sustained in Bramley and Stainer (Novello) which followed later.

If carol-lovers could only free themselves of the influence of these books, there would be a chance to revive the carol. Some twenty years ago now the writer began to give a series of Christmas carol recitals. The ideal—in spite of much head-shaking and forebodings of a gloomy nature—was set up of giving carols in the language in which they were written, and to the tune for which they were composed. This ideal was realized from the first and the standard maintained even when Polish and Russian had to be taken in hand. The central idea was the carol, not the translator—often the mutilator—nor the adapter.

In 1914, just before the war, the writer appealed to the faithful few and found that there was a fairly strong feeling in favour of the formation of a Carol Society. Since then although carols have been regularly given except for two years, when it was quite impossible, the project of such a Society has been in abeyance. By means of such an organization a volume of all our extant carols that are worth calling carols could be published, with notes as to date, place of origin, dialect, and so on, and where possible the air to which the words were sung. Our inheritance of 15th and 16th century carols alone is worth the effort.

H. J. L. J. MASSÉ.



## POET AND COMPOSER

Not long ago a distinguished composer stated "It would be a great pity for posterity if contemporary poetry was not wedded to contemporary music." The remark was made with some bitterness and sprang from a discussion of the prices demanded by some of the poets of the present day. That the lyric or ballad writer of to-day should be interpreted by the composer of to-day is an ideal for which both poet and composer should strive. But many ideals are shattered when financial considerations arise. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the song of the music hall or even of the theatre, but rather the higher class song of the concert room.

It is unnecessary here to discuss whether it is the music which is the more important, as it makes popular the poem or ballad, or the poem or ballad, in that they inspire the music. This is a point for discussion.

The first thing to be remembered is that the poem or ballad is, under the copyright Act, the absolute property of the poet.

(1) He may not desire that his poetry should ever be set to music. He may have a fixed idea that poetry should not be wedded to music at all. Though this view is improbable, yet, if this were the case, he has the absolute right to withhold his permission.

(2) He may on the other hand as a fond lover of his own artistic production desire his work to be linked only with such music as he may approve. He then has the absolute right to withhold his permission from any casual composer that comes along.

(3) But there may be a deeper wisdom in his refusal, for the poet may be unwilling to have his words—however beautiful the music—bawled into a gramophone by any chance singer. He may know the reckless ways of the composer in assigning rights to the publisher and he may shudder at the idea—to which the composer has become accustomed—of his rights being controlled by the tradesman who publishes and not by the author who has conceived the work.

In the instances cited it is possible to understand the poet's position. His refusal deals with the artistic side of the reproduction of his work and a true artist might feel very strongly on the subject.

But these instances have nothing to do with the financial issues. What are the financial issues?

(1) In some cases poets whose works have become popular and whose names may stand high in the public estimation demand either themselves, or through their agents, a sum down, so high that no composer can afford to pay it.

(2). In some cases he may ask a royalty so high that there is nothing left for the partner in the venture.

(3) Then there is the poet who asks a reasonable fee in exchange for a reasonable license.

(4) Finally, there are those who for some reason ask for nothing at all. This attitude is generally based on a fine if false ideal; it is not, as a rule, adopted because the poet wants either popularity or advertisement.

Thus much for the poet's position. The second point to be considered is what the composer wants? What is sufficient to satisfy him? It should be quite sufficient if he has a license to use the words with his music, under certain, not oppressive, limitations. He would not want the copyright, and he would not want even an exclusive license; but he would naturally like to pay as little as possible.

Sometimes the poem has been a real inspiration to him, so much so that without a thought of copyright or literary property he sits down and writes. The seed of music fertilised by the words bursts into flowers.

Bitter will be the composer's disappointment if, at length turning to the practical issues, he finds that he cannot make use of the words because the fees asked are exorbitant. In this case he can do nothing and this is a genuine hardship.

The third point for consideration is the position of the publisher. He is so accustomed to take all the composer's rights, and deal with them as he chooses, that he at once assumes he can deal with the poet in a similar manner. He receives a rude shock when he is told that he cannot have the copyright, that he can only hold a license to publish, and that the poet insists on having some control over the performing and mechanical rights, not understanding why the publisher should take 30% of these returns for himself. His argument is that performance in public and reproduction on mechanical instruments form the finest advertisements that the song can obtain.

In many cases the publisher refuses to be—as he would phrase it—dictated to, and negotiations come to an end.

From these few facts it will be seen that the composer falls between two stools, the greed of some poets and the inequitable

obstinacy of most publishers. How can the impasse be avoided? What will be a fair solution of the difficulty? It is not the unknown poet who is likely to raise any obstructions but the poet who is already famous and popular. If the making of money is his sole object he will gain less by demanding high fees, which in all probability the composer cannot pay. He would probably find it easier to sell ten licenses at £5 each than two at £25.

It is clear that it is not the artistic production at which this class of author is aiming, for so long as the fee is paid he is careless of the composer's reputation. The result will most probably be that such a poet will obtain his musical publicity—such as it is—through the immature work of a few wealthy amateurs. Anyone who is conversant with the output of modern songs can recall the names of poets who are overwhelmed by a musical obscurity which is often of their own raising.

On the other side it is essential that neither the composer nor the publisher should demand *the copyright* or even the *sole license*.

It is only the publisher who is likely to demand *the copyright*. No monetary return would pay the poet if he yielded to such a demand.

It is hardly to be thought that a composer, when the position is clearly explained to him, would demand a *sole license*. Indeed this would be in direct opposition to the ideal of wedding the contemporary lyric to contemporary music; for not only might the one composer's interpretation be inadequate, but the composer might make such a contract with the publisher—over which the poet would have no control—that the work might never reach the public at all or only through the barest circulation.

There seems to be no substantial reason why the right of private property should be arbitrarily invaded under the sanction of an Act of Parliament for the good of the present public or of future generations. If the spirit of the true artist were tempered by the spirit of business and the spirit of the financial agent elevated by the ardour of the artist an equitable arrangement would easily be come to.

Above all, in this case, as in so many cases of literary dispute, light must be thrown on the dark places, and each party must have a full knowledge of what he wants and what he gives.

In the Spring of this year the Composers' Committee of the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers proposed to call together a meeting of lyric writers and composers, but abandoned the idea, one reason being the difficulty of making a selection. No doubt any selection would be invidious. But a more important consideration resided in the fact that it would be impossible to come to any definite code by which the recalcitrant on

either side might be bound. The only possibility, therefore, of bringing about a better arrangement must lie in making the issues public through the press.

It will not be out of place to suggest that the composer might fairly accept from the poet and the poet might fairly give to the composer :—

A license to produce the words with the composer's music subject only to the payment of a fixed fee or small royalty\*.

A license to produce the words on concert programmes, on the understanding that neither the composer nor the publisher demands from other parties a fee for such production.

A license that the words may be sung in public without any extra fee.

An undertaking that the words are not to be reproduced in the first instance on mechanical instruments without the poet's sanction† and that he divides equally with the composer after deduction of collecting fees the royalties‡ received under section 19 of the Copyright Act.

An undertaking that the composer does not convey to the publisher larger rights than the license that the poet has granted.

The publisher has been intentionally omitted from this license as the issues should lie between the poet and the composer.

When the composer has obtained his license then he is in a position to write his music and to deal with the publisher. What contract he should make does not come within the scope of this article, but he must not overstep, as far as the words are concerned, the limits of the arrangements made.

G. HERBERT THRING.

\* It is almost impossible to decide what is an equitable fixed fee or small royalty. For words to an ordinary song £50 would clearly be inequitable as would be a 4d. royalty.

† After the first production on a mechanical instrument any manufacturer can reproduce subject to certain notices and certain payments. It is therefore essential to both the composer and the poet that they should be sure of one—the first—adequate reproduction.

‡ This point is of importance because publishers are in the habit of asking for 30% of these fees—a preposterous suggestion when it is taken into consideration what a splendid advertisement they obtain.

## THE LADY, THE BIRD, AND THE BRACHET

"GOOD LORD," said I, disengaging my arm, "Who is that singing?"

It was a September evening, and Georgina, her brachet, Riquette, and I were passing the corner of a suburban garden—limes and elms and a big holly hedge. The music came from high up in the hedge. The notes of a faery hautbois, in a rounded recitative with, as it were, chords sounded now and then by faery violins.

Georgina looked upwards with wide eyes and just parted lips. I looked, too,—at Georgina. It is always worth while to do so; and she knows it. The brachet sniffed about a lamp-post some yards ahead of us.

"Well," said I, "Can you make him out yet?"

"No, but if you come here I'll show you where I think he is . . . just about there, where the lime mixes up with the holly."

Looking over Georgina's shoulder (as one does at the piano) I found the little brown singer moving amongst the twigs, hunting evidently as he sang, before she did. I held my peace—over her shoulder.

"Isn't it jolly! I suppose it isn't music really, but you know it's very like lots of people—Scarlatti and all sweet, tidy music. *Why* isn't it music.

"By Haig," said I, "I do not know whether or not the singing of the lesser Whitethroat be music. But I think we are lucky to have heard him so late in the year. Look, there he is threading his way about and singing as he goes. He seems to be quite alone, perhaps a bird of the year beginning life with a long journey to Africa. He will probably be eaten by a profiteer in Italy, poor little devil. Perhaps that is why his song is rather sad. It is sad, isn't it? Or how does it sound to you?"

"It sounds sad, but I don't think he can be sad himself."

"I quite agree," said I. "He isn't sad, but his song is; and it gives you and me pleasure to listen to it, and we don't know whether it is music or not. Isn't this an unsatisfactory state of things, Georgina?"

"Of course it is," said she. "And now I suppose you are happy. But let us sit on the gate (for I see the house is empty) and I hope



the little darling will stay about and sing to us while we discuss him."

"I hope so too, Georgina," said I, "and hadn't you better call Riquette?"

Riquette protesting came, for Georgina is a very mistress of dogs, and had helped her to raise and place in the world several blameless families. When she whistles a dog it is one sound. It is another when she calls up to her a bullfinch who has been piping quietly fifty yards off in a wood; and another among the laden gooseberry bushes when she whistles 'Anitra's Dance.' I do not know if it is music she makes in any of these cases. In the last it is likest the song of the lesser Whitethroat. In all it issues from the same lips and seems to be shaped by them.

"Tell me, Georgina, *why*, do you think, our friend up there sings?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Probably because he likes doing it. But he doesn't seem to think about it much—or even to know he is doing it."

"Do you mean he is singing because it is a pleasant, easy exercise for him while he is looking for insects, for his supper?"

"Yes, I think so. Just as you whistle in the bathroom, whether it is mutilated Bach as it was yesterday (*don't* I remember!) or curlew and peewit noises as it was this morning."

"I am sorry. But you whistle, too, you know; for instance, when you got all those gooseberries I heard you whistling lots of things. I would like to know what there is in common between you and the Whitethroat. Granted yours is white—and it is, deliciously—so is his, rather; and you both sing (let us say) among the prickles of your respective gooseberry-bushes and holly-trees. And neither of you, so far as I have observed, pays much heed to its singing. Neither of you has any audience (for you didn't know I was back that evening) and . . ."

"One moment," she said—"about not 'paying heed.' I think I generally *do*, for one doesn't whistle tunes wrong, if one can help it. What was I whistling that evening?"

"It was the air of 'Anitra's Dance'—with remarkable accuracy. It must be rather difficult—'intervals' and things, aren't there?"

"Yes, that's what I mean. I must have been attending sufficiently not to make mistakes. By the way, did I make any?"

"You certainly gave the gooseberries one passage—a sort of up-and-down-stairs business, several times over, like a black-bird, and whilst you were doing that you picked no gooseberries."

"Then I must have been 'paying heed' (your tiresome phrase, not mine) and thinking of the music, more or less, all the time.

And it looks as if I am not such a lesser (bless its) whitethroat after all."

"Steady, Georgina," said I. "We do not know what he was whistling, only that it sounded very sweet to us and in a manner perfect. By the way, could you imitate it? Try."

So Georgina tried, at first seriously, and so seriously that Riquette began to whimper towards a howl. So we laughed and persuaded Georgina's lips back to their admirable curves. And Riquette began barking, thinking perhaps that we would now leave the gate and continue our walk.

"I expect," said I, "that Riquette knows something about it. She has lived, as they say, with musical people. Eh, Riquette?"

"I don't know," said the brachet shyly, as became her, "much about it. But of course I do sing when the moon is up, sometimes. That is, when you let me. I stay awake to sing, and I try and try to make my song right, but I was never taught it properly. It's always the same trail; I want to sing a sad song and I like singing it, but I cannot get it quite right, and it all seems sadder and sadder. And then somebody opens a window and shouts 'O go to hell, Riquette,'—and I kennel up."

Georgina looked at me gravely.

"You're very unkind sometimes," said she.

"Thank you, Riquette, thank you," said I, descending stiffly from the gate, and patting the brachet's head. "I think you have helped us a little. Your mistress here," said I, leaning on the gate, "whistles when she is gathering gooseberries, and sometimes she gives heed to her whistlings, and then she has to stop gathering them. A little bird we know warbles when he is hunting for insects, but he doesn't seem to give heed to his warblings. Except that I suppose he stops when he has to deal with an insect, and goes on again afterwards, either where he left off or somewhere else. You, Riquette, as I understand, you how . . . you sing, I mean—but seldom, and then it is a serious business, to which you give very great heed. I incline to think *you* are a musician, whatever the others are."

Riquette showed the white of an eye and wagged her tail as she lay below Georgina.

Georgina protested.

"I see what you mean all right," said she. "We all three make noises. The bird's is an almost unconscious act, mine is partly so; but poor old Riquette sings (bless her) with all her heart and soul and knows she never gets it quite right—just like da Vinci or somebody. Well, if Riquette's howling . . ."

"Hush!" said I.

" . . . singing, then, is more musical than my whistling of Grieg or burdekin's roundelay, I'll . . . I'll never play Schumann to you again," says she, getting down from the gate and taking my arm. "The Whitethroat's gone to Africa."

Riquette sprang up and trotted away ahead of us.

"Yes," said I, nodding towards the brachet, "I agree with you about *her* singing. But wasn't the bird's almost perfect?"

"Yes," said she.

"Quite perfect?" said I close at her ear.

"Why," said she, turning her lips towards me.

"Because," says I, making sure she might not whistle, "if it was we shall have to consult Scarlatti, and discuss this all over again. Would you mind very much if we did it all over again?"

"Let us do *both* all over again," says she . . .

And we followed Riquette home to supper.

W. MURRAY MARSDEN.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire.* Vol. 4.  
Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 25 francs.

The Editor of this work claims that it is "le monument littéraire le plus considérable qui ait jamais été élevé, en quelque temps et en quelque pays que ce soit, à la gloire de l'art musical." It is certainly planned on a most ambitious scale. It falls into three main divisions, viz :

- (i). Historical (the music of each country of the world being reviewed in turn as a whole).
- (ii). Technical and aesthetic.
- (iii). Alphabetical (a condensation of the previous volumes indexed alphabetically).

Parts ii and iii have not yet made their appearance. The first three volumes of Part i are published, and their contents as regards Europe may be summarized as follows : Vol. 1, Music of the Ancients and of the Middle Ages ; vol. 2, Italy and Germany ; vol. 3, France, Belgium, and England. The fourth volume is the one now before us and it deals with the music of Spain and Portugal.

To review critically the contents of such a volume would call for an essay of considerable length, and the space now at our disposal inclines us rather to deal with it on formal grounds. The besetting sin of all such encyclopedias is want of proportion, and that is the first test we are going to apply here. And if we compare in detail the space allotted to the principal nations hitherto discussed, we find the following table :

France	650 pages ( <i>circa</i> )	Spain	500 pages ( <i>circa</i> )
Italy	310 " "	Belgium	44 " "
Germany	275 " "	England	50 " "

This makes us prick our ears. Do the French really imagine their contribution to musical history is more important than that of Italy and Germany put together ? Is the music of Spain—great as was its great period—is it more than five times as important as the combined efforts of the countrymen of Tallis, Byrd, Wilbye, Dowland, Purcell, Ockenheim, Josquin, Arcadelt, and César Franck ? And is it not wise to be consistent in your basis of division ? If the Italian Lulli and the Belgian Franck are (by virtue of naturalisation) to count as French, is it not only logical (by parity of reasoning) to consider Händel as English ?

Such disproportion, such inconsistency, must weaken the claim of this Dictionary to a supra-national authority. That, however, does not make the present volume less interesting in itself. Regard it, not as part of a whole, but as a complete and self-contained history of Spanish music, and it is of the utmost value, for it is detailed, accurate (so far as we have been able to test it) and free from chauvinistic extravagance of judgment. The authors take a rightful pride in their great fellow-countrymen, of course, and M. Laparra, in his preface to the section

devoted to Spanish popular music, protests against the notion that in the South of Europe no music is to be found outside Italy. Such a protest is not really necessary in 1920, but in 1914 (when this essay was written) things were different; and it is in any case a fact that no country to-day can afford to neglect or belittle its own achievement. It would be better, were it otherwise; if an Englishman, for instance, could devote himself to the appreciation of Bizet, leaving it to the courtesy of the French to do justice to Parry or Elgar, as M. Rolland has, in fact, done justice to Purcell; or if a German should say nothing of Schütz, in the certainty that some Russian or Spaniard would hasten to repair the omission. We should all be much more likely to arrive at the truth, and we should have the extra solace of having preserved the amenities of international good-breeding. At present we are all crying our own wares like any touting bagman. Germany started it; now France has stepped into her shoes, and the rest of us, in self defence, are driven to behave in the same way. The authors of this volume can certainly claim that in this respect they are not sinners, as sinners go now-a-days.

To come to details, there are three points one feels inclined to criticize:

- (1). There is no index. Presumably in Part iii we shall find alphabetical cross references to Parts i and ii, but in the meantime it is often difficult to find one's way about the earlier volumes.
- (2). Neither names nor numbers are attached to the illustrations. The text refers to them, as a rule, by number, and one wastes a certain amount of time in linking up letterpress and example.
- (3). In the illustrations of the older period all the obsolete clefs are used, including such useless pedantries as the mezzo-soprano and baritone clefs. Many of the examples, therefore, convey nothing to the non-professional reader.

In spite of such criticisms the Encyclopedia is an achievement of real importance, and the present volume in particular contains a great deal of information not readily to be found elsewhere, and is therefore to be commended to the notice of musicians.

R. O. MORRIS.

*Voyage Musical au pays du passé.* By Romain Rolland. Hachette, 12 francs.

Monsieur Rolland is chiefly concerned in this book of essays with those whom he terms "the illustrious forgotten"—personalities in the world of music who though widely known and appreciated in their lifetime, have now sunk into oblivion. Precursors and pioneers, M. Rolland calls them, evoking a host of forgotten masters, and proceeding delicately to revalue values, and redistribute reputation. It is to such as Stamitz, first reformer of orchestral music, Telemann, initiator of German comic opera, Hasse, the greatest musician of his day though forgotten by a graceless posterity, that we owe the harvest we reap to-day. "We do not ask of them the perfect fullness of autumn. They were the fertile and capricious spring."

M. Rolland touches also on some unfamiliar aspects of familiar figures. There is a "Portrait de Haendel," a delightful stencil, and an essay on Pepys (*La Vie Musicale d'un Amateur Anglais*) which is somewhat discomforting to those of us who like to dwell on the inherent musicality of the English. The music, says M. Rolland unkindly but truly, which



was such an important factor in English 18th Century life, and which to Pepys himself was "the thing of the world that I love most," was quite third-rate; and he proceeds to prove his point, and sums up—"chose curieuse qu'une telle passion musicale unie à cette pauvreté de goût!" M. Rolland insists that the English golden age of music which flowered in Purcell, was of necessity brief, for it was a rootless plant in an unfertile soil. Our interest in music was always secondary to our interest in poetry, of which we took it to be a mere derivative.

The other essays in the book form a fascinating study of music and musicians in Italy and Germany during the first half of the 18th Century. We receive the impression that in the Italy of 1700 the proper study of mankind was music. From this apparently inexhaustible spring, musicians flowed over Europe, imposing their taste and talent equally on the innately musical Germans, the innately unmusical English, and the innately critical French. Drawing largely upon Burney for his material, he traces the growth of music in Germany from the early years of the century, when, entirely subjugated to Italy, they were "les Allemands dont la réputation n'est pas grande en musique" to the day some fifty years later, when Germany had become the musical nation *par excellence*. The Italian yoke was cast off, but not before the Germans had assimilated all that was best in the music of their conquerors. M. Rolland detects even in the German music of to-day, a quantity of "Italianisms." But, the German art might yet have failed to attain its full perfection had it not been for the fertilizing breezes which swept into Germany, through the doors flung open by Telemann and Stamitz, from Poland, Italy, France and, most important of all, from Bohemia. M. Rolland has evidently a great deal to say about Stamitz that has not found room in this volume, though he has devoted a delightful essay to Telemann. He promises also at some future date to repair "one of the worst injustices of history," the neglect of Hasse.

DOROTHY HOLLAND.

*Psychology applied to Music Teaching.* By Mrs. J. Spencer Curwen. Curwen and Sons, 15s.

This book is written by a wise woman—one of those women who have not passed through the world with shut eyes and closed ears, but have noticed things, and have thought what their meaning might be. The first word of the title will attract some and repel others. Mrs. Curwen deals with both. She leads these gently by the hand, and shows them that "method" and "heuristic" are only the Greek for "how" and "why"; and she asks the professed psychologist to be sure he "realizes his concepts," by putting them for him in such a way as to provoke a reaction from his "apperception mass"—in other words, by challenging his every word that is not plain English. Hers is a well-written book. We may not be going to, or be in anyway fitted to teach the piano to small children; but we were small children ourselves once, and we have seen a good many since, and we cannot help being interested in all that she says about them.

The central thought of the book is this. The children are to have the story first and the grammar of it second; the teacher is to have psychology lessons first and then to prove them true by the success of his teaching. If there were anything new about the first of these it would

be suspect ; but it is, of course, what every good teacher, or every teacher in so far as he or she has been a good one, has done. The second is the old burning question—how far virtue—here, the virtue of teaching—can be taught. Are the teachers (who are learners too, if they are worth their salt) not also grown children ? must not they too have story first and grammar afterwards, even if the grown up word for it is psychology ? “ Let it soak in,” says Mrs. Curwen, “ and you will find that when you are teaching is just the time when you will not think of it at all.” That is just what the sound teachers have always done. And the great merit of this book is precisely this, that what it says is not new but true.

A. H. F. S.

*Parsifal—a study.* By Rutland Boughton. Office of “ Musical Opinion,”  
2s. net.

Perhaps the case of opera might be put thus. It is possible for different minds, or for the same mind, to take an equal interest in *King Lear* and the 7th Symphony. It is probable that the mind which can do that will not also be able to take an equal interest in the *Götterdämmerung*, although it may be fully alive to the “ internal ” drama. Music *plus* drama and music *plus* dance are therefore for special minds which can fuse the two elements ; but the minds which can do this cannot explain the form, since to do that is to separate the elements. We can discuss either the music or the drama of opera, just as we can discuss either the melody or the harmony of music, but in doing so we put one meaning upon the opera whereas “ the poet has many meanings.”

The meaning which Mr. Boughton finds in the opera, the drama and the music, respectively, of *Parsifal* is this. In the opera, the progress, as compared with the other works, from the individual to the communal basis ; in the drama, the actual or the prophetic triumph of art (*Parsifal*) over science (*Klingsor*), domesticity (*Kundry*) and convention (*Amfortas*) by the aid of average human nature (*Gurnemanz*) ; and in the music, the realization of the Hegelian trinity in the three stages of Wagner's life-work—(1) drama for the sake of music, (2) music for the sake of drama and, from the third act of *Siegfried* onwards, (3) drama—but now with greater conviction—for the sake of music.

He admits the poorer quality of the music as compared with former works, but maintains that the dramatic interest with which the themes are cumulatively charged compensates for this. His view of the *Graal* theme as “ various pieces . . . like dropped stitches from old garments ” is curious in a staunch upholder of “ communal ” origins, and seems to lose sight of the real greatness of the theme, its rhythm.

These pronouncements and the many suggestive comments which accompany them will be useful for readers to compare with other views they may have seen or formed for themselves. Of course a man for whom science had opened a window towards heaven, or who had found convention a useful protection of his privacy, or who had “ domesticated the recording angel ” might enjoy *Parsifal* equally on some quite other reading.

A. H. F. S.

*The Piano player and its music.* By Ernest Newman. Grant Richards, 6s. net.

The appearance of this book, the first of a series called "The Musician's Handbooks," is an indication that the position of the "Player"—we may omit "piano," because the mechanism is equally applicable to the organ—has ceased to be debatable and is now accepted. Many, we are assured, find pleasure in it, or at any rate, dislike it less than the barrel organ and they are, in any case, not compelled to hear it against their will. For those who like it, the only question is as to how its mechanism and the roll cutting, may be improved; and those who do not will willingly concede that as a scientific apparatus for spreading the knowledge of music difficult of performance it is of great value.

Assuming, for the sake of argument, the best existing form of Player and the probability that it will, if slowly, be improved out of all recognition, there appear to be two questions which this book, for all its careful and fairminded analysis, does not dispose of. The first is this. In all performance the chief desideratum is the maintenance of a norm, from which variety is felt to be a departure. But to maintain a level of tone or of pace in the Player is to emphasize its mechanical basis, the very thing which the performer wants to conceal. In escaping from this Scylla he is driven upon the Charybdis of gushing crescendos and sentimental rubatos: his very virtues therefore must take the form of vices. The second is this. The ideal which the Player must propose to itself is to be able eventually to strike each note with the exact force the performer predetermines; at present the only means in its power lies in the division, as regards strength, of the keyboard at middle E, and the antedating of a perforation of the roll. But by the time the performer is able to manipulate the mechanism which will achieve this result, he will be confronted with a task which is the equal of learning to play the piano. This is no condemnation of the Player, but a re-assertion of the principle, which is true in music and war and everything else, that it all comes back from the machine to the man. This difficulty is recognized but not solved in the book, as may be seen from the mutually exclusive arguments on pages 21 and 34.

With much that the writer says about improvements in roll cutting, signpost criticism of rolls, arrangement of the rolls from the orchestral and not the piano score, and of the wide opportunities the Player offers to composers one cordially agrees. One is less sure about the musical education of the masses, which he predicts from its use in schools. The language of music will in that case be too much like the *mem-sahib's* Hindustani, a language no man ever wrote or spoke. It is justified in her eyes, of course, but only on the principle on which *Punch* once told us that the boy discarded "méringues" in favour of "mranga." At the same time, if he will go on and study the language, his confectioner's vocabulary may be of the greatest use to him.

A. H. F. S.

*The Complete Organist.* By Harvey Grace. Grant Richards, 7s. 6d.

There is nothing high-falutin' about this book, neither does it consist of tips for an examination in virtue. Its ideals are attainable and its advice practical, and a salt of humour savours the dogma. It sets out to show the organist where he was, and is, and may yet be if he will

think better not so much of himself as of his citizenship. It has a talk with him about his parish and the people it contains, watches him take a choir practice and conduct a service, and congratulating him on his conquests, points out that there are other worlds still left. Then it goes with him to the console and tidies things up a little, commenting on gaps in the library and uncut pages in the books, and offering suggestions about the ragged places in the service and the humouring of the congregation (with a steel core of management in it), how to, and how not to, accompany, what to think about "arrangements" and Gregorians, and how to give a reason for the hope that is in you about the alternately decried and belauded organ itself. Altogether a most satisfactory book to read with avidity and digest at leisure; and, in case you wish to go further, there is a bibliography of all the important topics.

A. H. F. S.

*The Church Organ.* By Rev. Noel Bonavia Hunt. No. 2. Church Music Monographs. The Faith Press, Ltd., 4s. 6d. net.

It is impossible to do justice, in a small space, to so exhaustive a book, though the author does not claim it to be such. Rather is it his intention to introduce to the ordinary organ enthusiast such knowledge of organ construction and tonal design as is essential for an intelligent grasp of fundamental principles, in the hope that it will spur him on to delve for himself in the mysteries of this complex science.

The book is divided into six sections—the Wind-Producing parts—the Console—the Sound-Producing parts—Art of Voicing—Tuning—Tonal Design—and in the Appendix are included some helpful illustrations.

The Chapter on Tonal Design contains suggestions of considerable interest and value. The author's advocacy of low pressure Diapasons and Stopped Flutes, of the 17th and 18th century type, on the Choir Organ is especially to be commended in these days of "high pressure." The quality of tone obtainable from pipes standing on a light wind-pressure is unique; they possess an old world charm peculiar to themselves and it is to be hoped that their construction will not be allowed to become a lost art.

The writer does not agree so heartily with the author's views on the Pedal Organ. True, every 8ft. stop of importance should possess a suitable Pedal Bass, but does the modern practice of extensive borrowing adequately supply this? The assertion that with the modern system of manual to Pedal transmission it would be quite sufficient to provide an Open and a Stopped 16ft. with their extended octaves, seems too sweeping.

HAROLD E. DARKE.

*The Chorales.* By A. W. Wilson, M.A., Mus. Doc. No. 1. Church Music Monographs. The Faith Press, Ltd., 4s. 6d. net.

A most interesting monograph. A brief but thoughtful essay on the influence exercised by the Chorale tunes on German music is placed at the beginning of the book—a justification which it hardly needs; then come chapters on the Hymn Books, showing the four main sources—German folk-hymns, Latin hymns, secular folk-tunes, original melo-

dies—from which the chorale melodies are derived; on the personal achievements of Luther and Walther; and on the origin of the most important melodies taken individually, followed (Part ii) by a transcription of twenty of these melodies in the form in which they are found in the post-Reformation hymn-books, with brief historical notes. Paper, printing, and general get-up are unusually good for these hard times.

R. O. MORRIS.



*La revue musicale*, edited by Henri Prunières (226 Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris VII. Annual subscription: France, 50 francs, Abroad, 60 francs).

This is the first number of a new monthly musical magazine, which has arrived too late for review. It contains articles on Louis Couperin by André Pirro, Stendhal by Maurice Barrès, Albéric Magnard by Claude Laforêt, and Ritual dances of Cambodia by Félix Cardé. These occupy about half the volume. One third is taken up with the music of the day in eleven different countries, and the rest with reviews of books and of music. This is the November number, belated by an accident; the December number will be devoted to Debussy, among the writers on whom are MM. Laloy, Vuillermoz, and Alfred Cortot.

# ENGLISH SONGS

## CURWEN EDITION

### *Press Opinions on the First Song Recital.*

Messrs. Curwen are certainly doing their duty—and more—to the English Composers.—*Sunday Times* (Ernest Newman).

The English song-writers are having a glorious time of it just now. The publishers and the singers are both treating them with the utmost generosity. Among the former, Messrs. Curwen, and among the latter, Miss Greville, an intelligent young singer, have done as much as any one to give the new English song its chance.—*Manchester Guardian* (Ernest Newman).

For some time past Messrs. Curwen have been making a speciality of high-class modern songs by the younger generation of composers. The distinguishing feature was a delightful freshness that was most enjoyable. The music showed remarkable keenness of preception of the spirit of the text and a freedom from conventionality and sincere desire to impress the inner meaning of the words.—*Referee* (Lancelot).

A publisher's concert is sometimes looked at askance, for even a music publisher must live, and he usually lives under suspicion of publishing wares that serve no more laudable end than that of enabling him to do so. But if some concerts of this type have fallen into disrepute that given last night by Messrs. Curwen is a signal exception. They publish an edition of English songs that is free from the tawdry sentiment that disfigures our native art. . . . The standard was high throughout, and reflected great credit upon the firm and its advisers.—*Pall Mall Gazette* (Edwin Evans).

It proved the courageous enterprise of at least one English musical publishing firm, Messrs. Curwen, who are as determined that the English song-writer has a future and shall have his chance as they are convinced that he deserves it.—*Near East* (A. K. Williams).

Here were songs, composed by a number of our younger contemporaries, not quite cast in the mould of the royalty ballad. . . . The recital showed us the great gulf that can divide music and poetry.—*Daily Telegraph* (Herb. Hughes).

The collection of songs which Messrs. Curwen brought forward at Æolian Hall last night was typical of the new tradition in British song-writing, with its liberty of imagination, its zeal for intimate expression, its freedom from extravagance, and its gradual casting off of foreign influences.—*Morning Post* (W. McNaught).

Messrs. Curwen are taking a very high standard in the choice of songs to be sung at their concerts, and that last night at the Æolian Hall was excellent in every detail.—*Evening Standard* (Herb. Antcliffe).

A concert of English songs given at the Æolian Hall on Friday night was notable as the effort of a publishing firm to propagate honest songs. A large selection of songs gave a very strong impression of the amount of genuine song writing capacity to be found among present-day composers when they shake off the fetters of the ballad concert.—*The Times* (H. C. Colles).

Concerts initiated by publishers have up to the present been almost invariably devoted to the exploitation of the shop ballads which they sell. I am glad to see Messrs. Curwen & Sons breaking away from this deadly tradition. They are publishing a really fine series of songs by modern composers and giving recitals of the same. Taken as a whole, the songs reached a very high level, and the performances differ from the ballad concert type as much as does light from darkness.—R. R. Terry.

Messrs. Curwen, in arranging an exhibition recital of songs recently published by themselves set a precedent that other reputable publishers might well follow. Hitherto such enterprise has been confined to the commercial ballad-mongers desiring to hawk their own merchandise. Messrs. Curwen showed that they have nothing whatever to be ashamed of; one might hesitate to prophesy a certain immortality for any of the songs heard, but with hardly an exception they showed decency of style, decency of workmanship, and some sense of poetic value.—*Athenæum*.

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